

FRONT: HYPNOTIZED INTO NON-SMOKING • 4 / MUSIC: BILLY TALENT • 31 / ARTS: AMELIA • 44

EDMONTON'S 100% INDEPENDENT NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

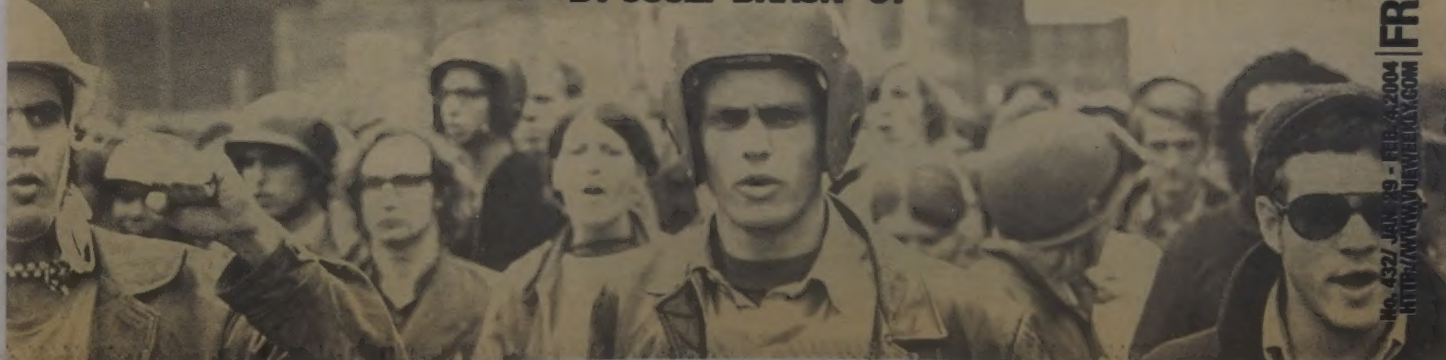
VUEWEEKLY



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BY JOSEF BRAUN • 37



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ON THE COVER

Two of this year's Oscar nominees for Best Documentary involve people guiltily reflecting on their actions during the '60s and '70s. It's fascinating to see Robert McNamara flay himself in *The Fog of War*, but it's even more compelling to watch Sam Green's *The Weather Underground* and see ordinary-looking men and women talk about how the bomb-throwing days of their youth • 37

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yourVUE

Moving violation

Regarding Darren Zenko's review of the film *Moving Malcolm* ["*Malcolm X*-cruciating," January 15-21]: of course you're entitled to your opinion, but you are an insensitive asshole. The film is largely based on fact, as implausible as it may have seemed to you, and the portrayal of Jolea is stunningly accurate. I ought to know because I am the real-life Jolea's father, and she is [writer/director/star Benjamin Ratner's] sister. The film has been shown and acclaimed at a wide array of international film festivals and it clearly resonates with different audiences. Many parents of autistic children have embraced Ben after seeing the film and thanked him for a moving experience that brought them a little closer to their own children. The only "idiot" is you, and instead of writing nasty reviews, you ought to quit being clever and judgmental and dis-

cover what "love" is about and how it's revealed. —BOB RATNER, VANCOUVER

I would like to address Darren Zenko's review of *Moving Malcolm* that recently appeared in *Vue*. As any film enthusiast knows, many reviewers make a point of being as snotty as possible, using their critique as a platform for self-aggrandizement. The intent of course, is to show us how witty and clever they are, usually to the detriment of any useful information for the reader. The practice is so common it's hardly worth mentioning, but in this case I'll make an exception.

I have never read such a worthless, superficial and openly malicious review. It is immediately obvious to even a casual reader that Mr. Zenko appears to have some sort of strange, personal grievance with the film's principal actor/writer/director Benjamin Ratner. He even alludes to it explicitly by stating bizarrely, "I know for a fact that people tried to send Ratner the message that maybe this 'hilarious and poignant story [needed jokes, a point and a story]."

Oh really, Mr. Zenko? Rather than

express an objective review of the work in question, which is what he's supposed to do, Zenko decides to inform us that he is privy to "behind the scenes" information to back up just how justified he is in launching into his adolescent invective.

Since he is so well-informed, he is doubtless aware that the character of Jolea, brilliantly played by Rebecca Harker, is in fact based on Benjamin Ratner's real-life autistic sister. This is the same character he refers to as an "idiot sister" and dismisses as a poorly formed "special needs" character.

Moving Malcolm is a touching film that deals with change, loss and the bond of family. The film has been well-received and stands on its own merits. Any reviewer is free to praise the film or criticize it as he or she sees fit. That Zenko is entitled to his opinion is not the issue. The issue is that his review is vicious, puerile and idiotic. We aren't told anything very specific other than the fact that the movie is "off the rails" or "sucky." How eloquent. He chides,

SEE PAGE 9

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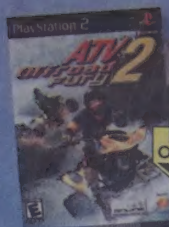
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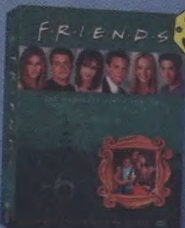
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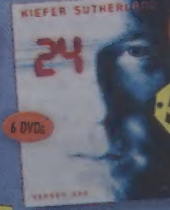
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Sean Rivallin

Save the last trance for me

Hypnotist Vance Romane tried to cure me of smoking... and I can't remember any of it

By DAVID LAING

I've been a smoker for the past 10 years. That's nothing to be proud of, nor is it something I've given much thought to. Like most smokers, I'm quite aware of my habit's negative consequences, but I've never tried to stop. Call it lazy, stupid or just the dangerous life-taking prop I use to charm the ladies. (Sadly, my failure to quit has more to do with the first two reasons than the third.)

Throughout the years, like all those fearmongering studies linking cigarettes to lung cancer, I've also thought that hypnotists were a lot of rubbish. But my only experiences with hypnotists are probably like most of yours: purely for entertainment. You know the old story—a guy pulls about 20 people onstage, hypnotizes about 10 and makes asses out of two of them. But the general consensus about hypnosis leaves skeptics like myself wondering if it's all tricks, illusions and mind games. So a couple of weeks ago when my editor asked if I'd ever considered giving up my bad habit—the smoking, that is, not the ladies—I

replied with a condescending “no” and followed it up with a sheepish look. His response stunned me.

“Do you want to go see a stop-smoking hypnotist named Vance Romane?” he asked.

“Who's he?” I said.

Vance Romane, I learned, has been a certified hypnotist since 1967, helping people stop smoking, lose weight, raise their self-esteem and, weirdly enough, improve their golf and bowling scores. According to his bio, he's helped thousands

of people stop smoking forever; I can only imagine how many golfers he's helped. Last week, on the night of Romane's seminar in Edmonton, I decided to take my girlfriend Amy along for the trip. Since she had been hypnotized before (and I don't mean by my boyish good looks) I figured she'd provide a good frame of reference. She described the experience to me as like being “super-aware of your surroundings but not caring about the consequences at the same time.” I should have her hypnotized next time we have an argument.

The evening began with about 100 people filing into a mid-sized conference room at the Ramada Hotel near the City Centre Airport. There was an awkwardness in the air that I couldn't put my finger on. Most of the people were quiet and kept to themselves. Just outside the entrance to Romane's seminar, there was a registration table with forms containing the usual personal questions for attendees to fill out. Name, age, address and of course the obligatory waiver of

responsibility. You know, just in case later on that evening you decided to crash your car, or hold up a convenience store and steal all its cigarettes. Given that my real name was on the guest list, my plan to sign up as Ivanna Humpyou of 69 Alphabet Street was quickly aborted.

As Amy and I entered the hall, people seemed excited and really nervous all at the same time—kind of like they were all waiting for Jesus to show up and perform a miracle. The evening started promptly at 7 p.m. with Romane telling us we'd be beginning

in a couple of minutes. People were scattered all over the place: on the floor, sitting on one chair with their feet propped up on another. Some had pillows and some had brought their own folding chairs from home. Obviously I wasn't in the presence of first-timers. But there were others, like me, who looked incredibly nervous. I'd never been hypnotized before and I'd convinced myself that I didn't want to be. After all, I had a job to do.

Finally, Romane took to the stage. (I don't remember what his suit looked like—more on my memory lapses later—yet I do recall that he had the nicest tan in the room.) I was amazed by how, right off the bat, he had the crowd in the palm of his hands. Putting the audience at ease with his professorial charm and joking about the myths of hypnosis, he explained there would be two sessions of hypnosis, a short one and a longer one after the break. Then came the sales pitch for his book, CDs and videos; Romane stressed that it was essential we had these items after we left. It was a shame I didn't bring the *Vue Weekly* credit card with me.

Romane took the audience and I through a relaxation technique, during which he got us to visualize various parts of our bodies getting heavier and heavier. I tried to fight it, but soon gave in just to see where it would take me. As I drifted off, I could hear Romane's voice echoing through the room with suggestions about non-smoking, healthier living and better self-esteem. I tried to pull myself back out and rationally assess the situation, but before I knew it I was awake. At first it felt like I'd had a nap, but after I regained consciousness I remembered everything that had transpired. After that there was a 20-minute break and at least half of the people in the room bolted outside for a cigarette.

AFTER THE BREAK came the 40-minute hypnosis. Since I'd already been intrigued by the first session, I was actually looking forward to the second one. So with my legs up on the chair in front of me, I set sail on another voyage on the *S.S. Hypnosis*. This time I let myself fall deeper into

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SEE PAGE 8



TRAVEL

Say WAH?

EDMONTON—Quick. Forget everything you know about West Papua, Indonesia. Next Thursday and Friday, February 5 and 6, seasoned moviemakers and globetoppers Matthew Singer and Andrew Hamilton will be screening their latest travel epic, *WAH! Pigs, Police and Penis Gourds*, at the Provincial Museum.

When we talked on the phone earlier this week, Hamilton wasted no time getting to the meat of the matter. "The penis gourd," he says, "is a local Papuan tradition. It's a vegetable, like a hardened squash or pumpkin, but elongated for the most part. Papuan men wear these gourds on their genitals—and little else."

A gourd? But why?

"You just have to express your individuality and what tribe you belong to," Hamilton explains. "Some tribes have wee little gourds and other tribes have these huge cylinders that are maybe three feet long. The size of the gourd doesn't matter, though. You're not more a man for its size.... It probably has something to do with the kind of gourd that grows in the area where they live."

The frustrating thing about Hamilton is that he seems to be one of those guys who gets it all done. He has a Bachelor of Science degree and works as a research assistant at the University of Victoria in a geochemistry lab. But after a trip to Tibet in 2001 with Singer, he decided to start a production company, Madzu Productions. "I was interested in doing more with the footage than having 10 hours of home video," Hamilton says, "so the three of us [Singer, Hamilton and behind-the-scenes man Neil Burkard] got together and edited film, composed music and put together a full-blown movie. It's just the result of three guys in a basement."

Their 2001 film, *Tibetan Farmers Adventure Hotel: Two Guys, Two Months, Two Showers*, ran 75 minutes and was well-received during its limited-run engagements in western Canada, including screenings at the Garneau Theatre. "Where that first film was sort of a fun romp through a really cool country, this one has some of the same fun humour through it, but it gets a bit more serious because the trip itself was a bit more serious," Hamilton says about *WAH!*, which will also be screened in Calgary, Vancouver and Victoria. "There was a separatist movement at the time of our trip and the violence that accompanied it. It was right in our face. There was no hiding it."

Travel and fame may sound appealing, but there's a downside to the lifestyle. "Unfortunately, extensive travel involves quitting that good job you might find," Hamilton says. "Security and comfort don't jibe with the lifestyle.... The number-one [reason more people don't seek adventure] is fear, for the most part. The areas we go to are sometimes off-limits or politically volatile. And for Matt and me, it's very rewarding to be



able to show people parts of the world that seem dangerous and scary and maybe which aren't quite that bad. It's people like you and me living there, but under very different circumstances."

As for would-be travelers, Hamilton, who didn't get into serious trekking until after university, has some advice. "Ideally, just take a day pack," he says. "That's all you're really going to need. That and a one-way ticket. Most importantly, just fly by the seat of your pants."

WAH! Pigs, Police and Penis Gourds screens at the Provincial Museum of Alberta on February 5 and 6 at 7:30 p.m., followed by a Q&A session with the traveler-filmmakers. For more info or to reserve tickets, go to www.madzu.com. —BRENDAN PROCE

EVENTS

Reach for Adopt

EDMONTON—By most estimates, there won't be much oil left to extract by the year 2100. So who would be surprised if the world's most powerful nation scammed to get at the stuff while it's still there? And why wouldn't the United States take advantage of all the reconstruction projects going on in Iraq right now to better position itself to scoop up the region's oil?

"The desires of the whole Bush-Cheney administration have to do with the misappropriation of the reconstruction funding," says Edmontonian Aaron Wilson, who is currently organizing a series of benefit concerts for the Iraqi Adopt-a-Town project. "The money is going to the more oil-rich regions where there's massive population."

The Adopt-a-Town project was born in Edmonton and its objective is to raise funds to help rebuild Iraq. Edmonton's chosen sister city, Al-Mutayha, is one of those without exploitable oil reserves. "There's nothing of economic value [to the U.S.] in the particular area we've chosen to develop," says Wilson, 30, who has a degree in anthropology and whose nighttime work schedule gives

him time to volunteer with Adopt-a-Town during the day.

Al-Mutayha was rocked during the Iraq-Iran war, situated in that war's most active region. It was also hit in both Gulf Wars. During the sanctions period, more homes were destroyed by the Hussein regime to quell the Shia movement.

According to www.liferelief.org, Adopt-a-Town's website, the Abul Khaseeb district, where Al-Mutayha is located, also has one of the highest concentrations of depleted uranium in Iraq. Depleted uranium is believed to be linked to birth defects and cancers. And indeed, there's been a 750 per cent increase in cancers in the region over the past 12 years.

Adopt-a-Town has raised about \$75,000 since the program began less than a year ago. That money will be used to rebuild essential infrastructure with Iraqi labour, a double boost to Al-Mutayha's economy. (A December 18 feature story about Adopt-a-Town on CBC's *The National* helped raise the program's profile even higher.) Wilson reports that some water treatment centres and schools are now back online and that 50 homes have already been rebuilt. "A big part of this project is to raise awareness rather than just money," says Wilson, who points out that activism shouldn't stop because the war is over. "This is a matter of redirecting people's efforts and values and minds."

Several local benefit concerts for Adopt-a-Town have been booked are more are planned. The first takes place on February 4 at the Sidetrack Café and features the George Bushes Acoustic Roadshow, Kevin Cook, Wendy McNeill and Joanne and Haley Myrlo. Admission is \$10. The second, on February 6 at New City, features 10 Second Epic, Half Cut and a yet-to-be booked third act.

The third show, slotted for March 20 at a still-undetermined location, will be part of the worldwide One World Beat series. OWB is a Swiss enterprise dedicated to "uniting musicians around the world against AIDS." This year, however,

the money raised in Edmonton will go to Adopt-a-Town. —BRENDAN PROCE

WEATHER

Strange but true: it's actually getting warmer!

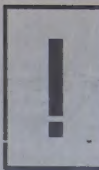
OTTAWA—While record low temperatures in the American northeast and parts of Quebec and Ontario, not to mention the frigid conditions within our own city limits, have people throughout the continent scrambling to turn up their furnaces, Environment Canada's latest report on the weather contains some sobering news on climate change. The agency warns that average temperatures across the country in 2003 were well above normal.

"The annual report on Canada's climate shows that 2003 was the sixth-warmest year on record, with temperatures 1.1°C above normal," stated EnviroCan.

But even more worrying, especially with so much focus on melting northern glaciers and shrinking polar icecaps, is the news that Canada's warming was even more accelerated in the Northwest Territories. According to the research, the average temperatures in the NWT were more than 1.5°C above normal.

And it's not just temperatures that were awry last year; officials at Environment Canada are also concerned about unusual precipitation patterns throughout the country. Rain, sleet and snowfall was 1.8 per cent above normal in 2003. But precipitation was not split evenly across the country; most of the increase was seen in the north, with much higher levels in the NWT, Nunavut and northern Quebec. Meanwhile, the area stretching from British Columbia through to Ontario actually received below-average rain and snowfall in 2003.

Still, the news isn't all bad. Ontario was wetter than normal last autumn, which led to a halt in the gradual lowering of water levels in Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. —STEVEN SANDOR



By MELANEE THOMAS

Plugged Nicol

Ken Nicol has gone from being part of the solution to being part of the problem.

Nicol, the Liberal MLA for Lethbridge East who recently resigned his position as leader of the provincial party, plans to run in Lethbridge under the Liberal banner in the next federal election. Approximately 70,000 people live in Lethbridge. Both of its post-secondary institutions, the University of Lethbridge and Lethbridge Community College, have roughly 7,000 students. So nearly 20 per cent of Lethbridge's citizens are post-secondary students.

As a provincial Liberal and opposition leader, Nicol could easily advocate on behalf of post-secondary students, particularly when the provincial government legislated away protection from rising tuition fees. Unfortunately for Nicol, the federal government's record on post-secondary education rivals the harm Alberta's Tories have caused students.

The federal transfer payment framework, set up by Paul Martin in 1995, hands over lump sums of federal money to the provinces with few strings attached. In Alberta, the government seems loath to pour that money into social spending, particularly programs low on the pecking order like post-secondary education. The end result: a post-secondary system that's not getting the dollars it needs from the feds, or from the province. Where do the dollars come from? Students. Tuition has increased in Alberta more than 200 per cent in the last decade.

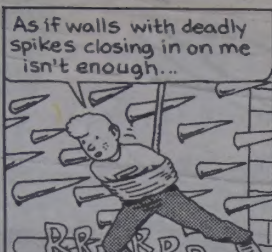
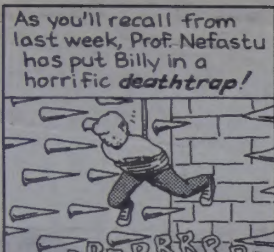
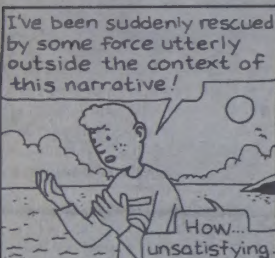
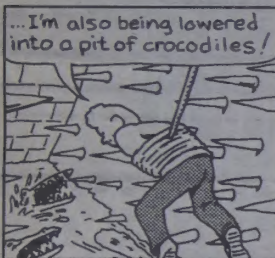
Post-secondary education is hurting in more places than student pocketbooks. Both levels of government seem very keen to engage corporations in academic research. The problem is that corporate involvement in academic research takes a valuable activity meant to expand knowledge for its own sake and perverts it for the sake of the bottom line. This shakes the fundamental philosophy underlying academia. Corporate-sponsored research fails every test of academic integrity.

As leader of the official opposition in Alberta, Nicol spoke out against the Klein government, openly criticizing its neo-liberal agenda and the forced starvation of social programs. As a member of the federal government, Nicol has to publicly buy into a federal neo-liberal agenda that differs little from the Klein agenda he used to fight against. It appears as though co-optation out of necessity is the order of the day. ●

Melanie Thomas is the Edmonton-based executive director of the Council of Alberta University Students.

TOM the DANCING BUG

BY RUBEN BOLLING



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Haiku Horoscope

ARIES

(Mar 21-Apr 19)
Life is like a bowl
Of cherries, only yours is
Cherries jubilee



LIBRA

(Sept 23-Oct 22)
Don't mess with the man
Named Super Mad Pimpmaster
Double XL, yo



TAURUS

(April 20-May 20)
Video games cause
Violence, at least when you
Beat out my high score



SCORPIO

(Oct 23-Nov 21)
Don't listen to the
Critics and write that epic
About the penguin



GEMINI

(May 21-June 20)
This week don't miss the
Secret meeting at the place
That I cannot name



SAGITTARIUS

(Nov 22-Dec 21)
You won't get far in
Life with only your courage
And a rabid yak



CANCER

(June 21-July 22)
Next time you order
A mudslide be prepared for
The consequences



CAPRICORN

(Dec 22-Jan 19)
Fortune smiles on you
But that's because it wants to
Borrow some money



LEO

(July 23-Aug 22)
It's only cheating
If he finds out; be sure to
Get rid of the "proof"



AQUARIUS

(Jan 20-Feb 18)
You will go down in
History when you step on
That open manhole



VIRGO

(Aug 23-Sept 22)
Listen to your old
Records; it'll remind you
How bad your taste is



PISCES

(Feb 19-Mar 20)
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By RICHARD BURNETT

The golden Felice

I just about died when Rod Stewart read a column of mine, in which I asked him to sing my favourite song, "Sailing," at his Montreal concert that night. Except the column began with the immortal lines that later made national headlines and got me banned in Winnipeg.

I wrote, "I love to fuck. I love to get fucked. I just wish straight boys had as much guilt-free sex as queer boys do (and with queer boys!)." "Don't worry," Stewart's Montreal promoter told me. "Rod has a sense of humour."

Another of my heroes with a fab sense of humour is Los Angeles-based, international bestselling author Felice Picano, one of the most important gay writers from the first generation after Stonewall who — along with Robert Ferro, Christopher Cox, George Whitmore, Michael Grumley, Edmund White and Andrew Holleran (four of whom have died of AIDS)—founded the now-mythical Violet Quill literary society in New York City in 1981.

"We legitimized publishing your book as an openly gay writer," Picano tells me over the phone from his home in the Hollywood Hills. "Younger writers today have reaped most of the benefits of what we struggled to achieve. It was historic, though I'm still surprised whenever I'm reviewed in the *New York Times*."

Others wonder how the former Fire Island party boy has adjusted to life in the City of Angels. Picano cracks, "People say, 'Didn't you retire in 1966?' They'll call me at 2 a.m. and ask, 'Aren't you awake yet?' They think I'm on a permanent vacation."

But Picano has never been more prolific. San Francisco's New Conservatory Theatre just wrapped up the world premiere of Picano's latest play, *The Bombay Trunk*. HarperCollins has just published a revised edition of his book *The New Joy of Gay Sex* and Haworth Press will reprint his memoir-trilogy this year.

Picano has never been busier, but does he still feel relevant? "Young gay people are not as gay-identified today," he replies, "and that's a good thing, because they grew up in a world where the gay culture already existed. When I told [some young kids] I helped build this community centre, they looked at me as if it had been there 100 years. But there's still more to build."

That in a world where—go figure—*Will and Grace* tops the Nielsen ratings. "While [Will and Jack] are as stereotypical as Amos and Andy, they help

humanize gay life," Picano explains. "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy does that better for the simple reason that it shows gay and straight men touching and the straight men don't turn gay, which is what I think a lot of straight teenagers [still] think."

Picano also doesn't mince words when it comes to the current gay obsession with same-sex marriage. "When they ask me on talk shows, 'Does this make sense?' I always talk about the disaster of American heterosexual [relationships] and when I'm done discussing that I'll ask, 'Why are we talking about this again?' Socially I don't believe in marriage. But we require the legal rights. I was in a partnership for 16 years and it was only when I became a widower that I realized that I had been married."

As for sex today, he quips, "I don't mind starfuckers. If people stop me in the street and ask if I'm Felice Picano, I'll ask them, 'What's in it for me?'"

Clearly life in L.A. has it perks—like occasionally lunching with Troy Donahue, whose upcoming memoirs will reveal his life as a closeted '50s matinee idol. "In a way, Troy was a pioneer," Picano says. "He dropped out of

The bestselling guide for gay men

THE JOY OF GAY SEX

by Felice Picano and Robert Ferro

showbiz because he couldn't be out. He left the business because he couldn't be himself. I do respect him. He really did stick by his principles. He gave it all up."

Picano contrasts Donahue with Richard Chamberlain, who finally came out publicly in his 2003 memoirs. "I read about a chapter," Picano says. "It was fine, but about 20 years too late."

Picano loved Chamberlain's memoirs about as much as he enjoyed writer Larry Kramer's '80s AIDS play *The Normal Heart*. "The Normal Cash Register—that's what Robert Ferro called it. It's a terrible play. The idea of making money out of AIDS is appalling to me."

Picano can say that because he was there when gay men were dropping like flies in the early '80s. "I remember the day when a friend and I were out at Fire Island and saw the sexual connections. We literally said, 'We're dead men.'"

His friend passed away from the disease, but Picano is still alive to document those great and turbulent days. "People tend to forget how young our gay rights movement is," Felice winds down. "We've only been around 40 years or so. We've accomplished a lot and I'm proud I've done my part." ●



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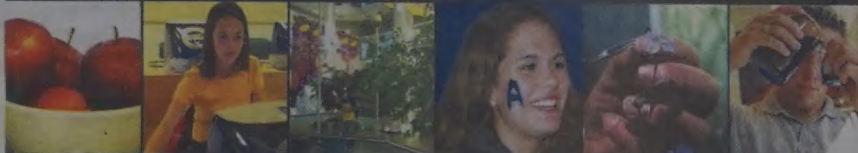
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media jungle

By AMY FUNG

CBC takes the road away from Avonlea

A few years back, when MuchMusic was Canada's only music video station (and arguably the best one in North America), it instituted sweeping programming changes and a major turnover of on-air personalities. The transformation was a watershed moment for MuchMusic, which was risking its credibility by attempting to appeal to new music fans. A new logo, a parade of new faces and a notable shift to a more teen-oriented format helped pave the way toward MuchMusic's present hybrid state, which lies somewhere between gossip conglomerate E! Television and the top-40 programming of MTV. Ultimately the nation's music station decided it wanted to "appeal" to an even younger generation and watered down its content to the embarrassing low of BradTV.

One of the leading personalities who jumped ship was Sook-Yin Lee, the venerable West Coast "alternative" veejay, artist, actress and musician now attracting a more mature audience on CBC Radio One's Saturday afternoon

variety show *Definitely Not the Opera*. Of course, the CBC wanted Lee on their bill to attract a younger audience, but it recently became clear that the generational gap was never that close to narrowing.

Lee, who had a minor role in director John Cameron Mitchell's cult success *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, was asked by her boss, CBC vice-president Jane Chalmers, to turn down a role in Mitchell's latest film, *Short Bus*. The official reason for this request has been described as a "scheduling" conflict, but during negotiations between Lee and the CBC the speculation was that both parties clashed over the film's sexually explicit content and how Lee's role would affect the reputation of the CBC. After a series of columns in the *Globe and Mail* and a reported flood of support from high-profile figures such as Francis Ford Coppola, Yoko Ono, Gus Van Sant and Atom Egoyan, the CBC eventually recanted its position and granted Lee a leave of absence.

For now, all appears to be well in the battle to preserve artistic freedom in Canada. But more importantly, as illustrated by the results of this show-down, the CBC seems to be making an effort to shed its old-fogey image without going through the process of dumbing down its content. MuchMusic has always been geared towards the under-35 demographic, but now that it appears to court only viewers under 15, a considerable void has been left for those whose tastes have matured but not matured to their grandpa's level.

Who's going to fill that void? It looks like CBC and other Canadian state-funded institutions have finally

awakened from their public hibernation and are beginning a rat race for financial and artistic success as Canadian entertainment.

To most people "CBC Radio" is either Radio One or Radio Two, but a Radio 3 exists in cyberspace. Launched in 1999, www.cbcradio3.com is one of the most innovative virtual networks out there (and not just because it uses a single digit instead of spelling out its numerical name). In fact, the site has already won both old and new radio and new media awards such as the Prix Italia and the Webby. The site strives to reach a broad range of viewers and listeners with an eclectic mix of music, photography and new media artists. A broadband connection is recommended for viewing and listening, but this just goes to show that CBC Radio 3 is leading the pack.

Canada's film and television industries are also in the midst of revamping their images and programming. Canadian television, with the exception of Québecois television, has long been as exciting as an episode to *Road to Avonlea*. Canadian film, again with the exception of Québecois cinema, barely exists on a commercial level. (Telefilm's attempt to "Hollywoodize" its projects in hopes of earning an American dollar seemed to end with the mediocre *Foolproof*.) On the other hand, Telefilm is finding enormous success with veteran Québecois filmmaker Denys Arcand's *The Barbarian Invasions*, which received arthouse acclaim and recently earned a Golden Globe nomination. (Canadian films still seem to do better on the arthouse circuit: Jean-François Pouliot's *Le Grande Séduction* closed out Director's

Week at Cannes and was one of 19 Canadian films that screened at Sundance earlier this month.)

While some may say that Telefilm is selling out, it's more accurate to say that they are reaching out. And international partnerships have been a key factor in Canada's achievements, with Sylvain Chomet's wildly praised *The Triplets of Belleville* (made with help from England and France) an excellent example. International projects should continue to be a top priority, but that's not to say that films and media made at home should be neglected. Even the once-venerable NFB is slowly returning to form, announcing recently that Zacharias Kunuk, director of the critically acclaimed *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*, has been added to the programming committee for its Aboriginal Filmmaking Program.

The news marks a return to state-funded projects that are both aesthetically interesting and in touch with the social aspects of the Canadian people, something direly missed since the glory days of the NFB with state-funded pro-



Sook-Yin Lee

jects dwindling into "cultural essay" status. This is all part of the NFB's 2002-2006 "strategic plan" that aims to rejuvenate Canada's film board into a major aspect of Canadian society while turning out critical and profitable works. Also in the cards is a Canadian collective headed by Paul Gross that intends to start a production company à la United Artists but north of the border.

Canadian film, television and radio have been trapped in limbo for long enough. Finally it looks like appealing to the masses won't necessarily mean enduring a lobotomy. ●

Hypnotist

Continued from page 4

a trance, floating in and out of consciousness. Yet somehow I was drawn towards Romane's suggestions—it was almost as if his words were my thoughts. Seriously. Thank God he didn't suggest I go for a sex change after the show.

When I started trying to write this story, however, I couldn't remember what happened for the next half hour or so. All that came to mind were messages like "not another puff no matter what" and "fresh clean air" and "if you are driving a car you will be very alert and safe after tonight." When the session was over my legs were numb and I was mumbling most of my words; I wondered if Romane had convinced us we were all crippled porn king Larry Flynt. At the very end of the night, everybody rose to their feet for a round of cheers and paper fireworks. Everybody but me. I couldn't stand yet.

It felt like only a few minutes had passed, not 40. My girlfriend and I drove home trying to understand what had just happened. Neither of us spoke most of the way home.

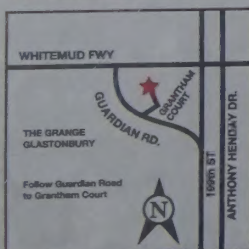
The thing is, it's hard to be critical or analytical about something you can't quite remember. It's also hard to judge someone who's essentially trying to help you through suggestion, whether you've been hypnotized or not. I'm still a smoker, but good luck to anyone who wants to quit smoking, stop eating so much or improve their crappy golf score. ●

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"This character is an avatar of its creator, which makes me wonder how this pathetic weasel managed to make and keep enough friends to shove this dog of a script through production." This is supposed to pass for a movie review?

It should be clear to anybody who reads this review that Zenko has no interest in being objective or fair. It should be equally clear that he is a substandard writer, mean-spirited and incapable of providing any credible criticism, constructive or otherwise. It should also be clear that he is an asshole. One is left only to wonder what petty demons must torment the mind of someone capable of producing such mindless vitriol. Of more relevance is the question of how this article slipped by an editor. May I respectfully suggest that more scrutiny be paid to Zenko's "reviews" in the future? What he has shown us here is just spiteful, amateurish garbage which, rather than tainting the film in question, is merely an embarrassment to your publication. — ANDREW KORVIN, VANCOUVER

This letter is in response to Darren Zenko's rapacious and malicious critique of Ben Ratner's *Moving Malcolm*. His adolescent venom reveals a high level of unprofessionalism, which would lead me to believe he had a very troubling personal bone to pick with the filmmaker. His true colours show when he writes "I know for a fact that people tried to send Ratner the message that maybe this 'hilarious and poignant story' [needed jokes, a point and a story]." For starters,

it was not Ben Ratner that suggested his story was "hilarious and poignant"—it was other critics. How does he "know" what people tried to tell Ben? Is he psychic? Ben has never heard of him, nor have any of the people Ben knows.

Calling Ben "Genejamin" is not only distasteful and rude, it belies a certain creepy animosity towards the filmmaker. Maybe this is Mr. Wacko's idea of funny... or maybe his own "hilarious and poignant" film that he has been trying to make since he was a wee lad roaming the plains got turned down by the funding agencies, and he has become Mr. Highschool Bitterman.

Should Ben Ratner be calling the police and getting a restraining order on Mr. Wacko?

I have no problem with constructive criticism, but best leave the task to someone with a more objective viewpoint and no spooky axes to grind. — CHRISTINE HAEBLER, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, MOVING MALCOLM

Paul Matwychuk responds:

When Christine Haebler and Andrew Korvin say critics found *Moving Malcolm* "hilarious and poignant," I'm not sure which critics they're talking about. A quick online search of *Moving Malcolm* in the Movie Review Query Engine (www.mrqe.com) spits out a grand total of four reviews, none of them exactly packed with favourable quotes. To wit:

"Destined to languish as a bottom-feeder in the Canadiana section at a video store near you." — *Exclaim!*

"Sluggish and clichéd." — *Toronto Sun*

"We're led to believe [at the end of the film] that Gene has learned from his mistakes, which is what Ratner will

have to do if he's determined to remain a filmmaker." — *Toronto Star*

"In the movies, almost everything is plausible. *Moving Malcolm* is not. Nor is it funny, moving, thrilling or watchable.... Beyond paying absolutely no regard to character development, plot or any kind of point whatsoever, the film features one of the cruelest portrayals of mental disability ever put to screen.... A terrific mess, and one of the worst movies of the year." — *Eye Weekly*

Although Ratner has besieged *Vue* with several angry phone calls complain-

ing about Darren Zenko's review, he has declined to write a letter to the editor on his own behalf. (He has, though, obviously coached his friends to write letters for him, judging from the way both Korvin and Haebler delicately omitted the same negative phrase from their quotes from Darren's original article—you know, the one about the film needing jokes, a point and a story.) Anyway, we do apologize for referring to Mr. Ratner as a "pathetic weasel," which is a personal comment that falls outside the scope of a film review. We doubt, however, that Christine

Haebler will offer a similar apology to Darren for calling him "Mr. Wacko" or that Mr. Korvin or Bob Ratner will do the same for referring to him as an asshole.

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print culture

By CHRISTOPHER WIEBE

Gord said Hal

When Hubert Aquin (1929-1977) killed himself on the grounds of the convent Villa Marie in Montreal, he left behind arguably the finest body of literary work produced in Quebec in the 20th century and an intellectually vital life that yoked Quebec nationalism and literary discovery. No less astonishing, perhaps, is the monumental fiction/biography *Hal: A Self-Murder Mystery* (McGill-Queen's) that Montreal filmmaker and writer Gordon Sheppard has made out of the texts and memories Aquin left behind in a quest to understand his suicide. The result is a sprawling 870-page book that overwhelms every description, a book without equal in Canadian literature.

Completed between 1977 and 1999, the core of *Hal* consists of transcripts of dozens of interviews that Sheppard conducted with Aquin's family, co-workers and friends from various periods of his life. It's also a compendium of tantalizing ephemera, including maps, photographs, newspaper articles, extracts from the National Assembly, scribbled diary notes and police sketches, potted descriptions of nationalist organi-

zations like the RIN and FLQ, summaries of events such as the 1837 Rebellion and a facsimile reproduction of Aquin's suicide letter. The reader, as one might guess, is inundated with information of varying magnitude: we find out, for instance, that Aquin had exactly 99 cents in his pocket when he died, and that the young woman who discovered Aquin's body was walking her dog Mandy, named after the Barry Manilow song.

The central "source" in Sheppard's text, without whom the book would have been severely compromised, is Andr  e Yanacopoulos, Aquin's partner for 12 years. A psychologist specializing in suicide, she has a sophisticated emotion-

al literacy and an almost frightening capacity to remember and assess in great detail memories that are unimaginably painful. Yanacopoulos collaborated with Sheppard on a 1985 book about Aquin's suicide, *Sign   Hubert Aquin*, which was constructed in much the same manner

as *Hal* though, at 350 pages, less than half the size. Another important contributor is McGill literature professor Jean Ethier-Blais, who believes Aquin left behind a tragically incomplete legacy: "By committing suicide he misfired—he missed out on his final 'becoming' as a writer.... He tried everything, and he didn't go to the end of anything."

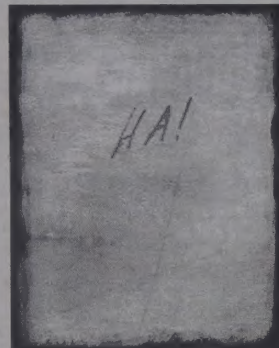
It is clear from the interviews that Aquin was an exceptionally gregarious person with a galvanic personality and sense of humour—encounters with him clung like burrs in people's memories. He was also very moody and needy, and intimacy could quickly lead to accusations of betrayal. Aquin talked of suicide throughout his life with many people. "I die, therefore I am" was his motto. *Hal* circles around the many possible reasons for his suicide, particularly his unemployment, a bad case of writer's block, his "rejection" by the Quebec Independence movement and his broken relationship with his ex-wife and the custodial loss of his two sons.

In his exploration of Aquin, Sheppard takes us inside the Quebec intelligentsia of the 1960s and '70s, a world driven by political and artistic revolution. "He always had the gift for saying things that shouldn't have been said," says poet/politician G  rard Godin. "He pushed society to the wall.... In that sense, one can say that he was unbearable and impossible—and irreplaceable."

When they theorize about his life and work, Aquin's friends constantly draw parallels between him and Quebec: one becomes a metaphor for the other. Aquin wrote his metafictional first novel, *Prochain   pisode* (1965), about a revolutionary writing about his attempt to kill an elusive spy while in a psychiatric institution awaiting trial as a terrorist. *Neige Noire* (1974), his last novel, is a haunting work of intimidating complexity that combines the screenplay form, sado-eroticism and a *Hamlet* intertext. He saw the Canada Council as a colonial tool and in 1969 became the first Canadian to refuse a Governor General's Award.

One of the most astonishing elements of *Hal* is the way the biographical "evidence" feels unmediated, forcing the reader to sort the materials into the profound and inane, and make sense of them. This brings the reader "into" the text like an Aquin novel. In so doing, *Hal* confronts the reader with their own insatiable hunger to know, raising the question of at what point voyeurism shades into an assault on the integrity of another person. Of course, *Hal* is mediated by the questions Sheppard asks and, less obviously, by the way he "edits" the book like a documentary filmmaker, cross-cutting between one opinion and another. Midway into the book, Sheppard makes the story of his obsession with Aquin clear, so we begin to understand the biographical subject and his pursuer side by side. Like A.J.A. Symons's *The Quest for Corvo: An Experiment in Biography* (1934), Sheppard shows us that a biography is always infused—consciously or not—with the life of the person who wrote it.

Using a brilliant experimental form, Sheppard brings Aquin to throbbing and pulsing life in a way no conventional biography could. As writer Jacques Godbout so aptly put it: "I think you can take all the clues and do as [Aquin] did to produce his books.... You rearrange all the clues. That's why his death seems to me to have been a success: you can make a thousand exegeses of it." ●



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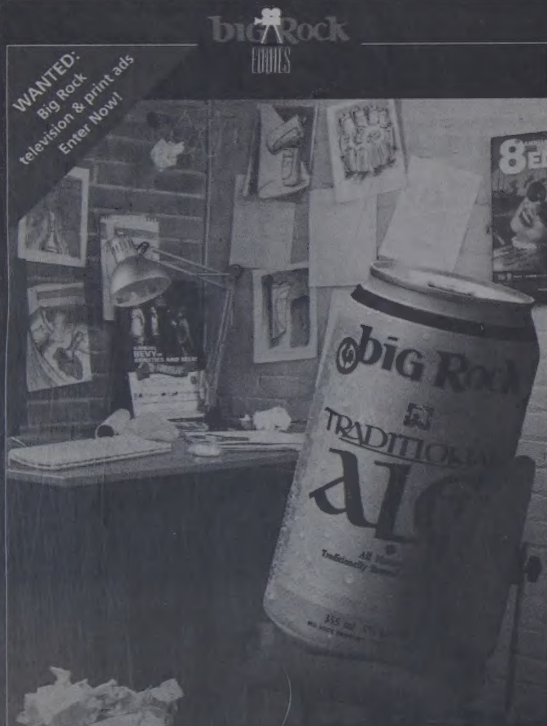
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Little murders

Booker Prize-winning Vernon God Little finds grotesque humour in school shootings

By BRIAN GIBSON

After Michael Moore's *Bowling for Columbine*, Gus van Sant's cold and austere *Elephant* and Douglas Coupland's *Hey Nostradamus!*, DBC Pierre's novel *Vernon God Little* is the latest work to be inspired by the April 1999 high school shootings in Littleton, Colorado. But Pierre's novel would never have received so much attention if it weren't for the writer's shady life and the fact that the book received the most hallowed of literary approvals—the 2003 Booker Prize.

Born in Australia and raised in Mexico, Peter Finlay adopted the pen name DBC (Dirty But Clean) Pierre as a reference to his checkered past, which British newspaper *The Guardian* unearthed about a week before the Booker was announced. A failed filmmaker, artist, gambler and smuggler after his father died when he was 19, Finlay also fell into drugs and once conned an American artist out of his house. After spending the past few years in a rented country hideout in Ireland, he vowed to start making good on his past sins with the publication of the book and now the added bonus of the £50,000 literary award.

The recklessness of Finlay's past seems to have rubbed off on *Vernon God Little*, which takes a helter-skelter ride through Texas on the back of spit-polished, bitingly original imagery and a distinctive narrative voice. Vernon Gregory Little is a crude, lewd, sex- and drugs-obsessed Holden Caulfield, and this novel is *Catcher in the Rye* meets *Catch-22*, as

written by William Faulkner. Or, if you prefer a film pitch, this is *Badlands* crossed with *Deliverance*, as directed by John Waters.

When the book opens, Vernon (who lives with his mother in Martirio, the barbecue sauce capital of Texas) is being questioned by the police about his connection to the mass murder of 16 people at his high school, which seems to have been committed by Vernon's friend Jesus Navarro. Vernon—surrounded by snooping cops, a pederast psychi-

REVUE BOOKS

atrist, and Eulalio Ledesma, a cut-throat reporter who embeds himself with Vernon's mom—has to hide the whereabouts of the family gun, his LSD pills and the porn he's collecting for a legless local lecher who trades him the amputee smut for beer. As his lies pile up, Vernon tries to flee town for Mexico (an idea he got from the movie *Against All Odds*), hoping to hook up on the way with Taylor Figueroa, an 18-year-old girl whom Vernon has fantasized about ever since he saw her tripped out on the back seat of a car during a party.

Pierre's bizarre, cartoonish plot is funneled through a teenage mind where thoughts pinball from expletives to TV analogies, then tilt over to the boy's epiphanous "learnings" about adolescence, adult hypocrisy, urban sprawl and the emptiness of modern America. "What kind of fucken life is this?" becomes Vernon's refrain.

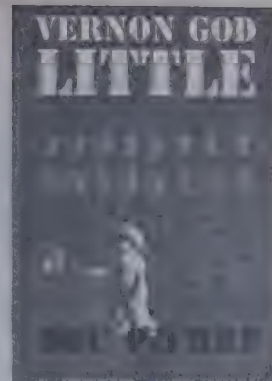
FOR ALL ITS droll humour and outlandish characters, *Vernon God Little* doesn't achieve broader social satire until its final stretch, where Eulalio devises a *Big Brother*-esque reality show set in prison, where the Internet and TV audience votes on which convict should be executed.

Vernon's malapropisms ("pow-erdime shift" is a favourite) and obsessive motifs ("twisting the knife" or "cross to bear") mingle with his crude, cynical take on the world. This is a Rabelaisian comedy of the grotesque starring a boy who has sudden bowel movements, conveys his mood through his Nikes and talks of fat, sexual smells, his ass and the local Mini-Mart or Bar-B-Chew Barn. Yet a touching scene with his mom and a tragicomic ending show Vernon's mind opening up as the teen matures and grapples with the miseries of a fiery media witch hunt, a cockeyed justice system and his warped adolescent worldview. The teen's pell-mell thoughts are often lyrical and sometimes tinged with sad uncertainty.

But it's Pierre's exuberant use of language that propels the narrative.

Dense paragraphs are bound up in tightly coiled sentences that lash out with striking metaphors and whip-smart observations. The imagery is never stale or florid, and Pierre's use of smells is especially sharp. When Vernon thinks about Jesus, he recalls how his pal seemed "abducted by glandular acids. Sassy song and smell hormones must fume off his brain, the type that curdle if your mom senses them."

It would be easy to call Pierre's first book more of an energetic novelty than a profound novel. But in the end, it's not the absurd yet somehow internally plausible situations or the strange but vividly realized characters that make *Vernon God Little* worth reading. Pierre's glistening language turns the story into a rush of fresh images and perceptions. Among the usually



restrained, serious Booker winners. *Vernon God Little*, with its rude, in-your-face, hyper-real style, is a sparking jolt of prose. ●

VERNON GOD LITTLE

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Whitewater

Mark Robin



Backcountry encounters with film-star ski patrollers, avalanche danger and combative alders

By SASHA UHLMANN

You might think I'm a wimp, but after three runs I called it a day. Whitewater had done me in. The first run shouldn't even count, though, because it was a warm-up groomer. I always have to warm up on a groomer. I didn't the day before and I yard-saled right under the lift on my third turn. The Blast run has a way of destroying all those who are not worthy.

But that's not why I headed home. Perhaps I should backtrack....

Because it hadn't snowed in five days—a rarity for Whitewater, just outside Nelson, B.C.—I decided that a little backcountry action was in order. I met up with three local snowboarders who were willing to show me some new terrain. We packed up our backcountry gear and headed up the Summit chair. From the top, it was an easy 40-minute skin along Prospector Ridge to the top of a knobby peak. The thick cloud cover blocked our view of the

surrounding mountains, but on a clear day you can see for hundreds of miles to the south.

We got to the top and the snowboarders took off their snowshoes while I dismantled my skins and trekks. One of the borders suggested that a good weight-loss method would be to walk around all day with trekks strapped to your feet. If only I had the money for touring bindings.

AS WE PREPARED for our descent, two of Whitewater's ski patrollers skinned up to test snow conditions. One of them is notorious on the hill because he starred in a bunch of ski films. I expected to get some disapproving looks for our out-of-bounds endeavours, but instead they passed on some safety tips, told us to have a good run and disappeared over the avalanche closure side of the ridge.

We split up into twos and then dropped over the other side. The first



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stretch was a steep, convex pitch, about 300 metres long, with small, thinly-spaced trees. My partner and I leapfrogged down the hill, trying to remain in each other's sight. We were extra-cautious because the steep pitch and wind-loaded snow increased the likelihood of avalanches. The small trees were hard to negotiate and I could only link three turns at a time before adjusting my course. As I descended, small slough slides let loose on either side of me, but nothing big gave way.

We met up with the other two on a flatter shelf that led to a long, steep chute. The chute is not as prone to avalanches so we could relax a little more. Ten-foot drops lined the sides and we took turns hucking off them into the untouched powder below. My new friends gave me the honour of first turns down the chute, so I carved my way down, enjoying face shot after face shot. My early-season legs began burning and the only thing that kept me linking turns was pure adrenaline. By the time I got to the bottom my legs were jelly but I was grinning from ear to ear.

Back at the lodge we ate our sack lunches and reminisced about the beautiful descent. We parted ways and I hooked up with another two boarders to do the infamous "backside." Backsides are the treed slopes that run from the back of Whitewater, down to the resort access road. The backsides are a 20-minute boot pack from the top of the Summit lift in the opposite direction of Prospector Ridge. From the top you have your choice of descents, all steep treelines with gullies, which spit you out at various points along the road.

We dropped off my pickup a few kilometres down the road then drove back to the hill in another car. One of the boarders was a local and he assured us that he could get us to ski out to the road, right at the point where we had parked my truck. We loaded our gear and set off.

ONCE AGAIN, it was fresh turns the whole way down. We skied through ravines, over fallen trees and soared

off snow-covered boulders. The rough, natural features made the place a backcountry terrain park. Things were going great until we hit a minefield of alder trees near the bottom. These short, multi-branched trees have a way of attacking your skis and not letting go. I carefully negotiated a path through them until I made a bad turn and ended in a particularly nasty tree with one ski up in the branches and the other lodged firmly below the snow. A war had begun.

I whacked at the branch with my poles but it held fast. I wriggled and tried to cut it with my newly sharpened ski edges but it would not break. I bent it over and kicked my feet but to no avail. In the end I freed myself by contorting my right knee in the wrong direction, then rodeo-flipping downhill. I came away tired and sweaty and covered in snow, but unscarred. To my delight I found part of a branch lodged in my boot buckles. That branch now sits above my fireplace as a trophy. I can sleep easier knowing that somewhere out there on the backside of Whitewater there's an alder tree will think twice before trying to mess with me again.

When we hit the road, however, we were nowhere near the truck. "It's my first time down here this year," my friend apologized. We had over-shot the truck by a kilometre and a half, so we strapped our gear to our packs and trekked back up the road. No one was driving up that late so hitchhiking was out of the question. I realized then that the one thing worse than hiking in trekkers is hiking a kilometre and a half on a gravel road in ski boots.

When we got back to the car I realized that I had forgotten to leave my snow boots to drive back with. This sparked an interesting debate: what's more illegal—driving barefoot or driving with ski boots? You be the judge. I opted for safety and drove back to the hill barefoot. ☹

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ski tips

BY COLIN CATHREA

The agony and the agony

The sky was as blue as a crayon. The snow was as soft as really expensive toilet paper. Sounds and smells enveloped my olfactory and optic nerves and it felt like I was being drowned in a pool of naked women.

What the hell am I talking about? I must have hit my head. It's hard to see anything. My eyes are open but all I see is faint, blurred light streaming from one point across the room.

It's a hospital all right. The sounds and smells envelope my... never mind. I'm definitely not thinking straight. There's one of those buzzer things hanging on the wall. I press it but I don't hear a buzz except for the one in my brain. Which damn hospital is this? I remember we were skiing. Okay, we were definitely in the mountains and I was with people I knew. So where the hell are they now?

It must have been a spectacular wipe-out. I always wear a helmet and ski fast and aggressively. I bet everyone is talking about "Colin's unbelievable crash."

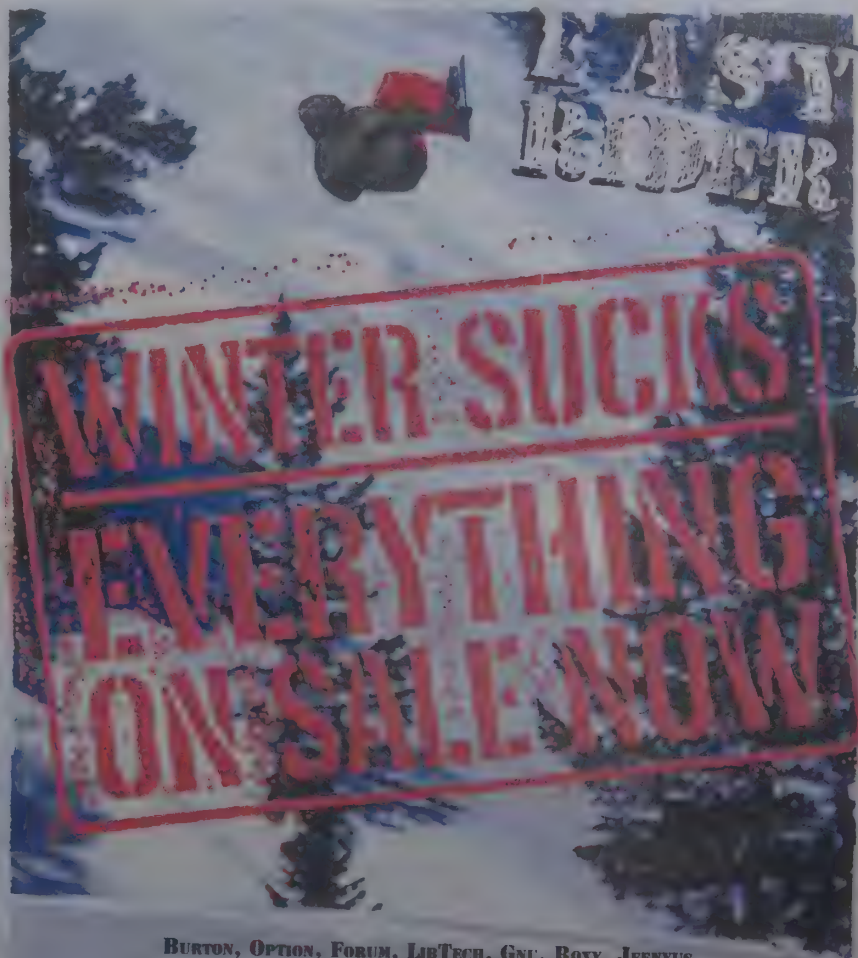
No nurse yet. My neck is definitely sore and it's tough to turn my head. My arms, shoulders... Hell, almost everything hurts. I must have been really smokin' down the mountain. I'm probably a hero at the local watering hole already. Problem is, I haven't got a clue what hole that might be. Finally someone is coming into the room. A blurry nurse stands over me and smiles. "Are we finally awake?" she asks. I reply slowly: "Not quite all the way.... Where am I?"

Jasper Hospital. Okay, at least now I know that Marmot Basin was the bane of my pain. I ask the nurse how bad my injuries are. She simply smiles and tells me that nothing is broken, except maybe my pride. Like hell, I think. I'll wear this head cast like a badge of honour.

Finally a friendly face. Mike sways into the hospital room and asks how I'm feeling. "Sore but not all that bad." And I ask him how spectacular my fall was—will it make *Real TV*? Mike hesitates and replies, "You may not want that." Why? Too painful to watch again? Ha ha. Ha?

"Let me explain what happened before you jump to any conclusions," Mike continues. "We were riding up the quad chairlift and you said your boots hurt. You lifted up the safety bar and leaned forward to loosen your buckles. I tried to grab you but it happened fast. I think you fell around 50 feet."

Splat. The sound of my ego hitting the floor. The moral of my story: be careful on the lift! ☹



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SnowZone

Vancouver

Skiing in the city: Cypress Mountain and Grouse Mountain, Whistler-style

By MARK RABIN

I recently managed to break away from the Whistler bubble for a couple of days to check out two "urban" Vancouver hills, Cypress Mountain and Grouse Mountain. Along for the free skiing was my ski buddy Ryan Bougie, a phenomenal skier and professional ski bum. (He's got a sweet trailer at the Riverside Campground in Whistler.) We set out intending to rip apart and dominate these two mountains, and that's precisely what we did.

Arriving at Cypress at a casual 10:30 a.m., greeted by the bluest of skies and abnormally frigid temperatures, we were giddy to find out what the mountain had in store. It was a Monday morning just after the holiday season, so it was relatively quiet in the parking lot and on the mountain. The first thing to catch our eyes was a "forbidden" zone of small cliffs and untracked powder dropping into the far side of the lot. I was drooling; anything for fresh, untracked powder. Ryan then gave me a quick briefing about how, a few years ago, he had skied down that "forbidden" area into the parking lot and was nabbed by a parky (one of the people with the shiny reflective vests who monitor the parking lot). The RCMP was called in and he received a \$115 fine for trespassing. Unbelievable. They would have been the best turns on the mountain, but alas, that's just too much cash to part with for five seconds of skiing.

The funny thing about city ski hills is that you're still in the city, and in every direction we looked a very effective and blatant sign stared us in the face. In bold, black lettering, it read "IF YOU FAIL TO LOCK/CHECK YOUR SKIS OR SNOWBOARD, THEY WILL PROBABLY BE STOLEN." Wow—now if that doesn't get the point across, not much else will.

THE HILL WAS in great condition, boasting a mid-mountain base of 320 centimetres, with soft-packed snow in every direction and stunning views of Vancouver, mountains and waterways. From some angles on the mountain, it feels like you could ski right into the heart of the city. Out to dominate, we agreed that we had to go straight down the main pitch, right underneath the chair, with as little turning as possible (a Whistler ski technique). First run of the day, two obvious standouts on the mountain and we both blasted down that pitch at Mach speed. Reckless, fast and full-on. The only way to go down the hill. (I should take a second here to explain the Whistler ski style. You see,

Whistler skiers stand out at other ski hills. They are cocky, fast, solid and fearless. It's an attitude that probably results from the quantity and quality of the snow at Whistler, its insane and limitless accessible terrain, and the intensity at which snow riders look at the mountain. It's an environment that pushes everything to the max.)

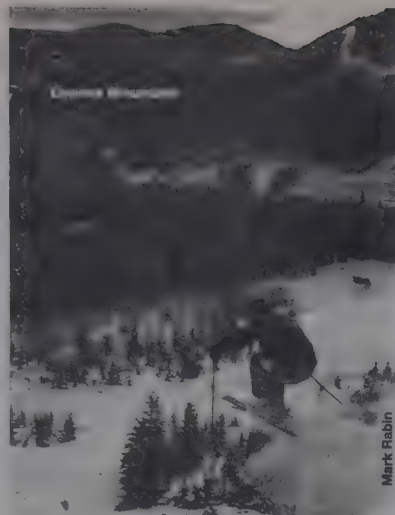
I forgot how much fun, however, a little mountain could be. On every chairlift up we chatted with local skiers and we befriended an older man on snowblades. This guy was 67 years old, had a season's pass to every mountain in the Vancouver region and loves to blast down the slopes on his tiny little snowblades.

AREA

We even did a run with him. He was so full of life and energy, it was refreshing. And the fact that he's got a 30-year-old girlfriend didn't hurt. Cheers to him. Other people we chatted with on the chair ranged from recently graduated students with no jobs to Canadian Armed Forces guys on a break. Skiing attracts such a diverse array of people. We tend to get so caught up in our little Whistler world that, at times, we lose sight of the real people out on the slopes.

On the way to the ski hill, we had agreed that we were going to find the hardest run on the mountain and ski it as hard and fast as we could. We began by asking the disgruntled lifties where we could find the "hardest run," but they only looked at us awkwardly as we were taken away by the chair. After asking numerous people on the chairlifts and eventually, consulting a trail map, we settled on a run called "Top Gun." It's a fairly steep run with a combination of soft and icy moguls and small stumps and trees. Just like every other run we skied that day, we shredded it in a matter of minutes, flying down the run barely in control with moments of life-threatening out-of-control. The only way to ski, really. After a refreshing Cypress Mountain experience and a total of 16 laps in five and a half hours, we called it a day and headed for the city.

THE NEXT MORNING, still feeling the effects of the previous night's all-you-can-eat sushi extravaganza, we



Mark Rabin

headed for Grouse Mountain. The Vancouver weather took an abrupt turn and went from crisp and sunny to snowy, sleety and wet. Vancouver traffic was at a standstill. Van becomes a battlefield when a couple centimetres of snow fall. Cars were littered everywhere; people were putting chains on and there were accidents galore—everything you'd expect from a three-foot dump of snow in any other region in Canada. We had no problems: our Volvo with snow tires served us well.

Grouse Mountain, a four-season facility, is equipped with everything from dining establishments, a cultural centre, hiking trails and ski facilities to a refuge for endangered wildlife. Instead of driving up to the base of the ski area, you take an aerial tramway called the Skyride. Apparently, on a clear day or night, the views of the Vancouver region are spectacular; however, on the day we ascended Grouse, visibility was poor. After having such a great day on Cypress, we were a little less than motivated by the extremely hard and icy conditions at Grouse. Its lower elevation means Grouse gets more warm, rainy weather, which, followed by the cold snap, solidified most of the mountain. The few centimetres of fresh snow that were on the slopes just made the conditions that much tougher. One minute it would be soft and powdery, the next it was icy moguly. These were some of the more difficult skiing conditions we've seen. We ended up skiing with an ex-Whistlerite who was ski patrolling at Grouse and he steered us towards some small patches of snow. We skied hard for a couple of hours, blasting down icy groomers and trying to find some fresh snow, but with the snow continuing to fall we decided that it would be best to call it a day and head back to Whistler before dark. Highway 99, a.k.a. Death Highway, is a rough go in extreme winter conditions like the ones that prevailed that day.

Compared to Cypress, the Grouse

SEE PAGE 18

Can't survive 55

How the masochistic demands of the 55-kilometre Birkebeiner race nearly did me in

By AMANDA FORTIER

Sometimes you have to question the sanity of the cross-country skier. Sure, there are the fair-weather dawdlers whose methods are clear. They're the ones who emerge, skinny skis and poles in hand, on those select majestic prairie winter mornings when the sky is a brilliant blue and the snow crystals glimmer like dancing beads along the ski trail. They're the ones stopping at every break in the track, pausing to relish the view, taking in the sounds and sipping their tea as they smile graciously at the pristine day before them. And then... then there are the all-weather, every-weather, hardcore, Nordic-numbered zealots. These folks can be seen from your living room window on the coldest day of the year. These Nordic junkies take it all. Rain, shine, sleet or slop—you just can't keep 'em down. They blaze down the path with relentless deter-

mination, a fierce cross between gleeful giddiness and sardonic insanity.

Once a year, in various snow-laden locations around the world, the two groups come together to participate in an event that has, over the course of time, brought fun and fury into a frenzied ball of good old-fashioned Nordic craziness. I'm talking, of course, about the Birkebeiner—and lo and behold, this year's festival is just around the corner.

Since I grew up in Edmonton and skied the river valley trails with the incomprehensible vigour of the latter group, you could be forgiven for assuming that I was a regular Birkebeiner. Alas, such is not the case. In fact, my first-ever full 55-kilometre Birkebeiner race was also the very last race of my skiing career. As a fitting way to end my competitive days, I participated in the most traditional of all Birkebeiner loppets: the Norwegian Birkebeinerrennet. This annual event celebrates the Scandinavian country's national sport as much as it provides justification for hordes of ecstatic, inebriated fans who line the 55 kilometres' worth of ski trails. Setting up their tents and tarps all along the rolling fields between Rena and Lillehammer, these crazed keeners roast wieners and chug cider as they hoot and holler slurs of encouragement

from their chop blocks in the snow. I have never experienced an event quite like it—and most certainly never as a part of a World Cup event.

ANYONE WHO'S EVER participated in a mass-start ski race knows the grave perils it can entail. When the gun goes off, poles inevitably fly upwards, skis uncontrollably shoot sideways and lycra-clad bodies recklessly lunge forward. Hundreds, if not thousands, of anxious dawdlers and fanatics try desperately to

EVENT

remain upright as they battle furiously for a spot in the track.

Skiing 55 kilometres under any conditions is a feat. About halfway into the 20-kilometre stretch of trail that weaves up into the barren mountains just outside Tingstadjordet, I began to question the masochism inherent in such a "ski festival." Doesn't "festival" normally connote pleasure—you know, frolic, frivolity and fun? "What the hell am I doing?" I began to wonder. How could I willingly subject myself to such excruciating torment, especially after a long and eventful Olympic racing season?

With my sister Jaime slogging it

out directly by my side and my teammate Sara Renner plodding along just ahead, I could no longer contain myself. As wiener smoke wafted down into my lungs, I began to do what I always swore I would never do in any "important" racing event: I started laughing. Not a slight chuckle or a muffled snicker, but a roar of giggles. And with every continuing stride forward these giggles became more and more debilitating, until finally I swayed myself off the track, incapable of maintaining balance. A little embarrassing, I must admit, but to anyone who's ever felt the paralyzing effects of "hitting the wall" or "bonking," the scenario is probably all too familiar. But realizing I was about as far into the race as I was from finishing it, I had little choice. Jaime and Sara, who had caught a dose of my contagious laughter, also began to wobble around in the track. We were doing ourselves in.

WITH AN ONSLAUGHT of drunken spectators witnessing this display of Canadian insanity, Jaime reached into the back pouch of her drink belt and pulled out a blessed handful of goopy brown power gel. We slurped back the sickly-sweet power packs with incensed desperation. Amidst gasping breaths of laughter, the sugar

hit our bloodstreams like lightning and our brains jumped back into motion. Suddenly realizing the three of us were being left behind in the mass shuffle of what we remembered was indeed a World Cup event, we had to get back on track—and fast. With an immediately restored sense of purpose, we jumped back into the track and bolted back into sequence.

Looking back at the Birkebeinerrennet, it's amazing to think how many thoughts, emotions and questions run through your mind during the course of a single race. Yes, there's little doubt that 55 kilometres is a long, long distance. However, the feeling of immense pleasure and unparalleled self-satisfaction you get from finishing such an ambitious event is almost incomprehensible. And this punishing pursuit is something dawdlers, fanatics and elite competitors can all appreciate together, in epic Birke-style. ●

Amanda Fortier is a former member of Canada's national cross-country skiing team and a former Edmontonian now living in New York City. In 1994, she won the local 15-kilometre mini Birke. The Canadian Birkebeiner is scheduled for February 14 at the Blackfoot Recreation Area east of Edmonton. For details, to register or volunteer, call 430-7153 or go to www.canadianbirke.com.



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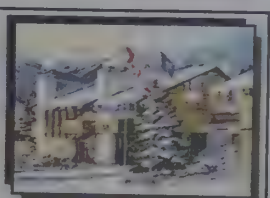
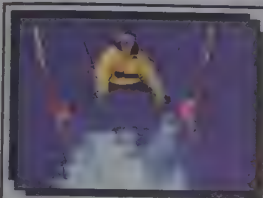
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The EASYRIDER Condition Report

Local

Rabbit Hill - 60cm base, 3cm of new snow, seasonal skiing, please call ahead
Snow Valley - 60cm base, 3cm of new snow, open temperature permitting call ahead

Alberta

Castle Mt. - 119-250cm base, 105cm of new snow, all lifts and 57 runs open
C.O.P. - 80cm base, 0cm of new snow, all lifts open
Fortress - 74-94cm base, 20cm of new snow, 5/5 lifts open
Lake Louise - 102-157cm base, 24cm of new snow, all lifts open
Marmot Basin - 61cm base, 9cm of new snow, 7 lifts and 75/84 runs open
Mt. Norquay - 93-120cm base, 15cm of new snow, 3/5 lifts and 18/28 runs open
Nakiska - 78cm of new snow, 21cm of new snow, 5/6 lifts and 32/32 runs open
Sunshine - 123cm base, 22cm of new snow, all lifts and 96 runs open

B.C.

Apex - 134cm base, 67/67 trails and 5/5 lifts open
Big White - 200cm base, 109/112 trails and 12/13 lifts open
Chrystal Mt - 129cm base, 3/3 lifts and 24/24 trails open
Fernie - 245cm base, 92cm of new snow, 9/10 lifts and 107/107 runs open
Kicking Horse - 135cm base, 32cm of new snow, 4/5 lifts open
Kimberley - 106cm base, 54cm of new snow, 6 lifts and 75/75 runs open
Mt Washington - 233cm base, 50/50 trails and 7/8 lifts open
Panorama - 98cm base, 25cm of new snow, 9/9 lifts and 115/119 runs open
Powder King - 279cm base, 2/3 lifts and 24/24 trails open
Powder Springs - 150-275cm base, 66cm of new snow, all lifts and 26/26 trails open
Red Mountain - 177cm base, 24cm of new snow, 4/5 lifts open
Silver Star - 154cm base, 12cm of new snow, 107/107 trails and 11/11 lifts open
Sun Peaks - 111cm base, 8cm of new snow, 10/10 lifts and 117/117 trails open
Whistler Blackcomb - 190cm base, 33/33 runs and 200/200 trails open
Whitewater - 230cm base, 67cm of new snow, all lifts open

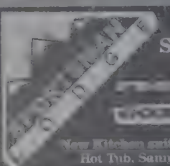
U.S.A.

Big Mt - 193cm base, 88cm of new snow, 8 lifts and 86 runs open
Big Sky - 190cm base, 0cm of new snow, 17/18 lifts and 150 trails open
49 Degrees - 144cm base, 15cm of new snow, 52 runs open
Great Divide Ski Area - 127cm base, 80/139 trails and 4/6 lifts open
Lookout Pass - 190cm base, 30cm of new snow, 3/3 lifts and 23 runs open
Mt Spokane - 111cm base, 8cm of new snow, 44 runs open
Schweitzer Mt - 162cm base, 17cm of new snow, 6 lifts open
Silver Mt - 187cm base, 24cm of new snow, 6/7 lifts open
Sun Valley - 123cm base, 0cm of new snow, 17/19 lifts open

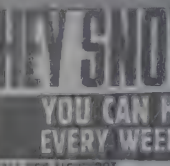
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SNOWZONE



By ALEXA LOO

Tales from the commode

The French are a very romantic people. They often build fantastic places like ski resorts and beautiful palaces without those ordinary, dirty things called toilets. Remember the Palace of Versailles? Built without a commode! And it seems that the French are still leaving out this little detail when they build things.

When you visit a ski resort in France, it will not necessarily have a main lodge with a cafeteria and washrooms like the ones you're familiar with in North America. In fact, the only food outlets may be private restaurants that charge outrageous prices for food and drink. In the basement of these private restaurants you'll find a washroom with an attendant charging you about 0.40 euros (about 65 cents) to use the facilities. Although this person does keep the facilities clean, paying him goes against my North American sensibilities.

Earlier this month, the snowboard World Cup tour stopped off in Alpe d'Huez, France. While driving the 10 kilometres from the town below to the resort nestled in the peaks of the Alps, we were reminded of another competition. The road is painted with cheers for the competitors of the Tour de France, which winds its way up this road every summer. It seemed fitting that my teammate Aimee Newton was sitting in the backseat reading *Every Second Counts* by American cycling superstar Lance Armstrong as we made our own way to the summit.

Our hotel in France was run by a tiny, energetic 70-year-old woman named Juliette. She was into having a good time and booked live entertainment in the cozy lobby of her hotel. Every evening a middle-aged Frenchman sang covers of favourites from the '70s and '80s. Completing his lounge lizard act was a snakeskin shirt that did little to hide his paunch. He also played the clarinet, saxophone and harmonica and performed magic tricks, much to the delight of the British children seated at his feet.

If the one-man band wasn't enough to keep us entertained, however, there was also a strange game in the lobby of the hotel similar to air hockey. The Italian team took to the

game very quickly and soon had us all organized into a tournament of championships on the game table. There's rarely a dull moment on the World Cup tour when there are so many competitive people in one place.

The races in France were originally supposed to be both snowboardcross and parallel giant slalom (PGS). But due to poor snow conditions in France, the snowboardcross was moved to Switzerland on the following weekend and the race originally scheduled in Switzerland was moved to France. In order to run a boardercross event, you need a lot of snow to build the jumps and features.

The chance worked out well for us, giving racers a double header weekend in France and the snowboardcross riders a double header in Switzerland. Jasey-Jay Anderson had a great first day in France, posting a fourth-place finish right behind three Swiss racers. Aimee, Jerome Sylvestre and I were a little farther back in the pack, in the 20s. Unfortunately for the Canadian team, we were not able to improve our results from the first day to the second.

After the races in France, the Europeans who had the luxury went home for a few days while the rest of us raced our rental cars 11 hours to St. Johan im Pongau for a Europa Cup event. The Europa Cup is one level down from the World Cup, but in this case—because most of the World Cup athletes had nothing better to do but go to St. Johan—the level was really close to that of a World Cup.

St. Johan was going to be the site of the snowboard events in 2010 Olympics if Salzburg, Austria had won its bid. Thanks to a snowstorm that dropped 15 centimetres of fresh snow, the course was extremely tough and challenging. There was an unprecedented number of interferences. (An "interference" occurs when the person racing in the course next to you makes a mistake and either crashes into you or prevents you from finishing your course.) Aimee braved the tough conditions, the flying snow and the flying competitors to finish third in the PGS event, the top Canadian result of the day. ☺

Alexa Loo races for Canada's national snowboard team. For more information and race results throughout the season, go to www.fis-ski.com.

Vancouver hills

Continued from page 14

lifties and staff were pleasant, good-natured and helpful. At Cypress I found them to be dark and somewhat bitter. Sure, it was Monday morning, but hey, this still is a business. One of Grouse's more desirable features is its very attractive and inviting lodge. Constructed with that log cabin/hunting camp feel, it's a hit. It is a shame that we didn't get to fully

experience Grouse Mountain, but there's always another sunny day. I've also heard great reviews about Vancouver's third local mountain, Seymour. That'll be another trip.

Vancouverites and visitors to the city are blessed with fantastic and diverse winter playgrounds. With activities ranging from downhill skiing to snowshoeing, the downtown executive or student can be on the slopes within 20 minutes of leaving their office or school.

You gotta love B.C. ☺



The Elephant and Castle on Whyte's

By DAVID YOUNG
AND JOHN TURNER

Here's the Oilers rundown for the past week. The Oilers followed a thrilling home win over the pesky Dallas Stars (3-0) with two losses at Rexall Place (2-1 to Tampa Bay and 4-3 to Nashville). The Oilers then traveled to Colorado to see the superstar-filled club edge the small-market Oilers 3-1.

John: Before we get too down on the Oilers we should remember that things could be worse. We could have a \$77 million payroll and still be losing games 9-1 like the New York Rangers. But seriously, what is up with the Oil? Just last week after shutting out their old nemesis the Dallas Stars by a 3-0 margin, it looked like they'd reached a turning point in their disappointing season. They were just one game under .500, after all. But instead of building on that momentum, they decided to show up two periods late for their next two games.

Dave: You're talking, obviously, about the Tampa Bay and Nashville games at Rexall Place. Both games saw the Oil following up a sluggish start with late-third-period onslaughts. Both were a case of too little too late. They have to hit, aggravate the other team and play ugly—during the whole game. In the Dallas game they hit hard,

played hard and won. Playing ugly works right now—just look at Charlie Theron in *Monster*. She left the pretty stuff behind and won a Golden Globe and will probably win an Oscar. Try it, gang—it works. But back to the Rangers/Senators game last Saturday night. It was the first game after Jaromir Jagr added his millions to the already bloated Rangers payroll. The 9-1 finish was great to see, but it showed that budget can't always be used as an excuse. The Rangers spend loads of cash and still suck. The Oilers don't have loads of cash; sometimes it takes more than just overpaid superstars to build a team. You just have to look above the Oil in the standings to Calgary to see that.

John: As a fan it would have been far better had Edmonton not come out in the third period and played exceptionally well to make them close games. At least then you could leave the games thinking the team is just shit. But it's frustrating to see them play that well for one period—you can't help but wonder where they'd be in the standings if they played entire games with that level of intensity. Then that bet with your Calgary friend about the Oil finishing ahead of the Flames in the standings wouldn't look so stupid.

Dave: That's a bet I'm glad I didn't make. It's going to feel very uncomfort-

able to watch the Flames in the playoff derby while the Oilers aren't taking part. Maybe that's how Ben Affleck will feel reading about J-Lo's next few boyfriends (or husbands). I hope he likes golf as much as hockey players do. With Calgary playing far above expectations and Minnesota playing effective defensive hockey, it's hard to imagine every Northwest Division team (Vancouver and Colorado being the other two) making the playoffs. Edmonton could well be the only team to miss out, given the level of play we're seeing.

John: The Oil played great against the Avalanche when they were at even strength but couldn't capitalize on their many scoring opportunities. They went 0-5 on the powerplay while the Avs went 2-3 and that was the difference in the game. Their powerplay performance summed up not only the game but Edmonton's poor season as well. Craig Simpson was great on the powerplay when he played for Edmonton but he was surrounded by a more talented group of players. Under his guidance, a powerplay that was average in previous

years now sits dead last in the league.

Dave: Here's another sign of the times for the Oilers. The club held its SuperSkills afternoon last Sunday, giving its players a chance to pit their skills against one another. Who stood out? Jason Chimera was the fastest skater. (He sits in the press box most of the time.) Jarret Stoll hit four targets in four shots. (He plays very few minutes and gets few chances to hit a real net.) And Georges Laraque had the hardest shot. (He also has no goals this year.) No wonder the All-Star Game will be Oiler-free. ☹

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School of Hospitality

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Session starts at 7:00 p.m.
Room U100

Tuesday, Feb. 3

Electrical and Electronics programs

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Session starts at 7:00 p.m.
NAIT Shaw Theatre

Health Sciences

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Various room locations: consult website or call for information.

Wednesday, Feb. 4

Applied Building Sciences

Understand these Engineering Technologies: Civil, Construction, Design & Drafting and Geomatics, plus the fields of Architectural, Interior Design and Landscape Architectural Technology. Unique certificate programs too: Aircraft Skin and Structure Repair, Graphic Sign Arts, Millwork & Carpentry, Advanced Woodworking & Furniture Design.

Session starts at 7:00 p.m.
NAIT Shaw Theatre

Thursday, Feb. 5

Mechanical and Manufacturing Technologies

Machinists, mechanics, materials engineering, mechanical engineering and more

Session starts at 7:00 p.m.
NAIT Shaw Theatre

Resources and Environmental Management

Learn about Chemical and Petroleum Engineering Technology. Get the facts on Geological, Chemical and Forest Technologies, Biological Sciences and NAIT's Water/Wastewater Technician programs.

Sessions start at 7:00 p.m.
Forest Technology: Room V322
All other programs: Room X107

Saturday, Feb. 7

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Session starts at 11:00 a.m.
Room F117

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NAIT HP Centre for Information and Communications Technology, main floor lobby.

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82 BBQ AND NOODLE HOUSE

9118-82 Ave • 448-9988

With the growing tickle in my throat letting me know sickness would overtake me soon, I decided I needed a big, spicy bowl of some type of Asian soup. Steve had heard there was a new noodle house down Whyte—and it seemed like the perfect remedy to the evil brewing inside me. The menu is packed with all sorts of standard Chinese fare and it's too bad we're just a pair popping in for a quick bite because the BBQ duck dinner for four (at what seems like a reasonable \$65.75) looks tasty. Instead, we split a few dishes: the empire chicken, a BBQ pork chow mein and, to curb my spicy soup craving, a medium-

sized bowl of the seafood hot and sour concoction. The server brings me a huge pot of loose leaf jasmine tea, helping me soothe the irritation in my throat prior to the main event. The food arrives quickly, starting with the soup. This hot and sour version has your typical tofu and strands of thinly sliced Chinese mushrooms, along with peas, shredded carrots, calamari and baby shrimp in an ultra-thick, almost gelatinous broth. For the short while that the soup remained hot (temperature-wise), my throat feels much better. After getting through a bowl or two each, the empire chicken and the chow mein arrive. The former, served on a small, oval platter with breaded chicken chunks, mushrooms, green peppers, carrots, water chestnuts, baby corns and peanuts, is supposed to be spicy. (It had the little red chilli beside the name on the menu, for Crissakes.) It's good, yes, but provides little in the way of a kick. I have to be honest—I wasn't too impressed with the chow mein platter, either. The amount of BBQ pork amongst the bok choy and other veggies looks scant and upon further digging, we find our initial assessment to be correct. I

did like the crunchy noodles, however, a nice contrast to the rest of the dish. **Average Price:** \$ (Reviewed 01/08/04)

MILL CREEK CAFÉ

9562-82 Ave • 439-5535

Other than a bevy of nice-looking sweets and baked goods, sandwiches are pretty much the order of the day at Mill Creek Café. Kate orders the Montreal smoked meat sandwich, while I eventually get around to choosing the salmon salad. Then come the questions. "Swiss, cheddar or cream cheese?" the counter girl asks. Kate says Swiss, I say cream. "Tomato, cucumber and sprouts?" Yup. "Pickles?" Sure. "Hot, honey or Dijon mustard?" Kate says yes to the former and after a bit of deliberation, I pass, figuring there's no need to add mustard to the salmon. "Mayo and butter?" Neither. Mill Creek bakes everything fresh each day and as I attempt to wrap my mouth around the massive slices of grainy whole wheat bread with pieces of carrot in it, I think to myself that it looks awfully inviting. I had taken note of the fact that Kate asked for hot mustard and I patiently awaited her reaction. Sure enough, it came. "Whoa," she says after the first or second bite. It's actually really hot stuff—I try a nibble and some of the mustard actually burns a small nick on my lip. These sandwiches are huge and because baked goods are in our immediate future, we pack up the remainders and head back to the counter. This time, I'm only slightly more decisive—a piece of chocolate cherry loaf (a mere buck and change) and a slice of lemon meringue pie, though the chocolate peanut butter bars were crying out at me. **Average Price:** \$ (Reviewed 12/04/03)

SMOKEY JOE'S HICKORY SMOKEHOUSE

15135 Stony Plain Road • 413-3379

I figure—er, I mean, I reckon—Smokey Joe's was conceived as a replica of old-fashioned prairie cuisine, or at least an homage to it. License plates from all over the continent dot the walls and the menu, bound in wood, has headings like "Samwiches" and "Young Un's Dinners." The ranch theme is a little schmaltzy but for a guy soon to vacate the province, it's enough to bring a small tear to my eye. The coolest thing has to be the pink butcher paper they use for tablecloths—that's a nice touch. My comedic dining buddy Steve is along for this trail ride and he busts a gut when he spots the veggieburger on the menu. "I bet you it's never been ordered," he says. Well, neither of us are gonna be the first so instead, we put all our eggs in one high-cholesterol basket: the sampler for two. It includes, in no particular order, two roasted quarter chickens, pork ribs, turkey, ham, beef and two of Smokey Joe's famous ultra-hot wings. Oh, and garlic toast. "We're out of wings tonight so I'll give you another quarter chicken. Is that okay?" our host asks. Deal! You get your choice of three sides with the sampler so Steve and I agree on cornbread, beans and potato salad. I don't notice much green anywhere in the restaurant so we see no sense in having any on our plate. Back a century ago, a cowboy wouldn't have been clamouring for a side salad, right? I swear there's a strained look on our server's face as she lugs out the plate with what Steve refers to as "a pile of meat" on it. "There, go wild," she says. All of the homemade barbecue sauces are lined up in front of us—Smokey Joe's sells them on the premises, along a variety of the meats, including jerky—and it's time to get to work. On this snowy, frigid night, the platter gives me a much-needed dose of summer. The spicy taste of the smoked meats, the richness of the beans and the creamy potato salad make me forget that it got dark at 4:30 p.m. that day. **Average Price:** \$5-\$55 (Reviewed 12/11/03)

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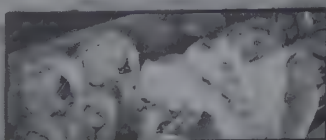
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Cold lunching at Flavours

Flavours Modern Bistro creates welcome heat on Whyte Ave dining scene

By DAVID DiCENZO

It didn't take me long to realize that all the clanging sounds ringing throughout my apartment were a result of the unbearable cold outside—my home's way of crying, I guess. A few days cooped up, with little in the way of decent food, produced similar pangs in my stomach. I'd had enough. I did my best Jacob Two-Two routine (wore two of everything, wore two of everything) and ventured down Whyte Ave, feeling brave, albeit stupid, for the effort.

You want brave? Try opening a restaurant a few weeks before Christmas, which is exactly what the owners of **Flavours Modern Bistro** have done on the famous Old Strathcona stretch. Sure, you get the Christmas push but January is downtime for most establishments, as the holiday sprees have left lint in place of currency in most people's pockets. Then again, there's a reason rents on Whyte are so high: never-ending traffic.

I walked into Flavours (kudos to them on the inclusion of the "u," by the way), the former location of the Bagel Tree, and was immediately impressed by the look of the swanky new spot, what with the cozy blue chairs, dark hardwood décor (both tables and floor) and the high ceiling complete with oddly-shaped alcoves in the walls.

"Good call on the fireplace," my friend Steve says, arriving a few minutes later, sporting just as many layers.

Things are good. I'm warming up and I have an intelligent, concise menu in front of me, offering a selection of salads, apps, "flavour-wiches" and a few tasty looking entrées (oh, and two varieties of eggs Benedict). I almost bite on the braised lamb shanks with a white bean and lentil ragout, but I *always* get lamb, so go instead for the chicken pancetta sandwich (sorry, flavour-wich), featuring a grilled chicken breast, pancetta, smoked mozzarella with a roasted red pepper and garlic mayo on multi-grain bread. Basically, it's a high-end "club." In a fowl mood himself, Steve selects the five-pecan crusted chicken, a real earthy-looking dish that was served with a brown pommery mustard sauce.

BUT BEFORE those items arrive, we simply have to try some soup. A whole segment of the media lounge at Rexall Place goes on and on about the cream of mushroom soup they serve there, so Steve and I both feel obligated to sample Flavours' version, this one containing a "hint" of curry. There's a wealth of wild shroom varieties in the large bowl (oyster, shi-

take, and so on) and though I leave a few at the bottom of my bowl, the rich soup is more than welcome as my quads finally start to defrost.

Alberta guru Dennis Miller concocted the wine list and I try a glass of the house merlot to go with my food. Like everything, it's quite nice. I'm pleased by the chicken pancetta combo and I'm especially happy with the complicated side salad that

RESTAURANTS

accompanies it. Radicchio, mixed greens, artichokes, roasted peppers, tomatoes, sun-dried tomatoes, a terrific vinaigrette—it might be easier to recall what *wasn't* in it, actually.

And the pecan-crusted chicken is growing on Steve.

"It takes you a couple of bites to

Radicchio, mixed greens, artichokes, roasted peppers, tomatoes, sun-dried tomatoes, a terrific vinaigrette—it might be easier to recall what wasn't in it, actually

appreciate it," he says, commenting on the depth of flavour.

I save half of my loaded sandwich for the woman at home, though I have another, more selfish motive: I've already mentally committed to dessert. The chocolate pecan pie comes out on a done-up, diamond-

shaped plate and it's just an awesome caper to the meal. An espresso is the proper accompaniment, while Steve sticks with a cup o' joe.

I've been asking a few questions every so often and even requested to keep a menu handy for a closer examination, so by the time we're wrapping up, our waitress (who kinda reminds me of singer Natalie Imbruglia—trust me, that's good) gets quizzical.

"Are you chefs?" she asks.

No, just a couple of hack writers forever in search of strange and excellent food.

More people begin to file in and I decide that Flavours is a solid addition to Whyte's dining scene and not just because folk are trudging along in minus-40 weather to get there. I can't think of many, if any, places on the strip that offer such an

obvious level of sophistication yet so little in the way of pretension and overly expensive fare. The well-proportioned dishes top out at about \$16 or \$17 while \$40 or so is the

top price on the wine list instead of the starting point.

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POWERPLANT

restaurant & bar

Saturday Jan 31

THE TIME CIRCUS

W/ CUSP AND PAUL BELLOW & THE DEAD CANADAS

Saturday Feb 7

MAPLE MUSIC ARTISTS FROM TORONTO

PILATE

W/ STABLIO (EMI) AND por nada

TIX AVAILABLE @ TICKETMASTER, BLACKBYRD & THE POWERPLANT

Saturday Feb 14

A HARD ROCK VALENTINE'S DAY

RAKE, PORTAL AND SUPERSEED

Saturday Feb 21

WHEATMONKEYS

W/ KOAN AND CORDOBA

Saturday Mar 13

WARSAWPACK

W/ NEVERTHELESS AND GUESTS

For more info, call 492-2048 or visit www.su.ualberta.ca/events
The Powerplant is a service of Your Students' Union for UoA Students, staff, alumni, and their guests. All shows are non-refundable unless otherwise stated.



MUSIC • this week

thursday

Shake off the chill tonight at the new Escape Ultra Lounge (formerly Nashville's Electric Roadhouse) at West Edmonton Mall. United Productions are kicking off their season with the first Edmonton appearance of U.K. trance DJ and BBC Radio One personality **Judge Jules**. Try to get down early and check out the epic classic trance set being spun by locals Neal K and Vue's own David Stone. Tickets are available at Foosh, Sunkissed Tanning and Underground WEM.

friday

Cape Breton supergroup **Slaine Mhath** (pronounced *slawncha va*) bring some Celtic cheer to St. Albert's Arden Theatre. The youthful, innovative group is like nothing else in their field, mixing bits of modern technology, like samples and dance beats, into their traditional jigs and reels. Check out their new album, *Va*, for a taste of what's in store. Tickets are \$22.50, available at Ticketmaster and the Arden box office (459-1542).

saturday

If you've got a taste for some offbeat rock 'n' roll, then check out Stars down on Whyte Avenue. Trot upstairs and see Calgary's Amazing Larrys, Down for the Count and the bluntly-named A.S.S. We can only assume that it's short for "apocalyptic shit storm" or "amazingly slippery socks." You can also watch DJs from Edmonton and Calgary duke it out over the decks at **Futureshock 2004** party at Y Afterhours. Tickets available at Y, Foosh and Underground WEM.

sunday

It's Super Bowl Sunday. Watch the New England Patriots try to take down the Carolina Panthers, drink some beer, slug your friends in a friendly way and enjoy the musical distractions. The American national anthem will be sung by **Beyoncé Knowles**, and the half-time spectacular will be led by Janet Jackson. But of course, everyone will be watching the commercials. Kickoff is at 4:25 p.m. local time.

monday

Provided that the weather improves by today, you could hike down to **your favourite local indie record store** and buy some albums by local indie artists. These are the people who are braving this climate just like you, and instead of complaining, they transform this icy berg into their muse. May we recommend recent releases by The Floor (*Autonomy Off/On*), Champion, Alberta (*Silk Purse*) and the All-Purpose Voltage Heroes (*Decorate Your Monster Shirt*)?

tuesday

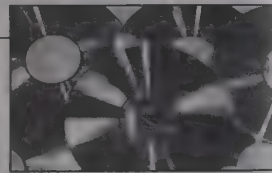
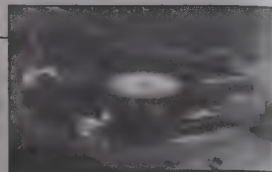
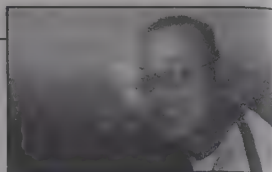
Move fast if you want to get tickets to see **Trapt** tonight at the Joint. The heavy end of this California band has captured a lot of ears out there with singles like "Headstrong" and "Still Frame," and their self-titled album has become a break-away hit on the charts. Tickets are \$15 at Ticketmaster and doors open at 7 p.m. If you can make it, bust down to A&B Sound's southside location an hour earlier and meet the band.

wednesday

Local musicians are getting together at the Sidetrack Café for the first of several local shows supporting the Iraqi Adopt-a-Town Project. (The next is at New City on February 6.) Tonight it's a roots roundup with the GBs Acoustic Roadshow, Joanne and Haley Myrol, Kevin Cook and **Wendy McNeill**. Proceeds will go toward Edmonton's adopted town of Al-Mutayha, located near the Kuwaiti border. Cover is a mere \$10.

newswire

The latest installment of the **Much Does Edmonton** showcase will take place at Red's on February 21 and will feature Social Code, Corb Lund, Les Tabernacles, Politic Live, The Floor, Slow Fresh Oil and Drive By Punch.... The Saskatchewan Recording Industry Association has announced that due to their current "human resources situation" and the need for "a timely review process," they will not present the **Flatlands Music Festival** this year.... American online music retailer **MusicRebellion.com** has announced that they will offer song downloads to customers for five cents U.S. apiece.... Performers at this year's **Juno Awards**, set to take place at Rexall Place on April 4, will include Sarah McLachlan, Avril Lavigne, Nickelback, Barenaked Ladies, Nelly Furtado and Michael Bublé.... Speaking of **Nickelback**, the prairie rockers will return to Edmonton on March 18.... The Songwriters Association of Canada presents **Songposium** on January 31 at the Union Bank Inn between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., featuring workshops and panel discussions.... Swedish metal band **Opeth** were unable to play their scheduled show at Red's on January 20 due to an illness and flight delays; refunds for advance ticket holders are available at the original point of sale.



**BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND
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NICKELBACK

IN CONCERT



**ON SALE
SATURDAY
AT 9:30 AM**

with special guests

MARCH 18

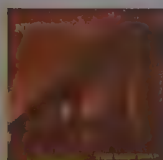
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SECTION VIII
WITH EULOGY & TEXAS BLOOD MONEY
FRI JAN 30

\$4 AFTER
8PM

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VIP CARD

FREE
BEFORE
8PM

DRINK
SPECIALS

HEADRUIN
WITH BRIDGETT & FIRST AID KIT
SAT JAN 31

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8PM

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VIP CARD

**HYPNOTIST
SAILESH**
SUN FEB 1
SHOW STARTS AT 9:30 DRINK SPECIALS - FREE ADMISSION

**SUPERBOWL
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SUNDAY FEBRUARY 1
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MEGA BASH
THE DJ ENTERTAINMENT & DRINK STORE
SAT FEB 14

WAKE UP
FRI FEB 20

<www.reds.ab.ca>

MUSIC



music notes

BY PHIL DUPERRON
AND JERED STUFFCO

Eclectic Circus

The Time Circus • With Cusp and Paul Bellows and the Dead Canadas • Powerplant • Sat, Jan 31 Most bands are really touchy on the subject of their name. Either there's no story behind it, just some random words that sound cool together, or it's a crazy inside joke that makes no sense to anyone but them. It's surprising, then, to hear Greg Antoniw, bassist for

local funk rockers the Time Circus, wax poetic about the name they adopted a year and a half ago after deciding High Priority wasn't for them.

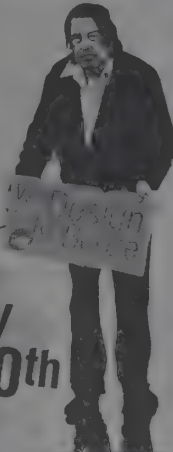
"I don't know," Antoniw says. "The Time Circus can mean things on all sorts of levels. Whether you're talking about really cosmic things: time and space and how random yet ordered everything is—kind of circus-like, I guess. Or you're talking about our music. It's very eclectic, I think, yet we want to keep it solid, rhythm-wise. We want people to be bobbing their heads and dancing and moving with our music, but at the same time we want to take them somewhere unexpected. So we decided it was a pretty fitting name, as strange as that is."

Just as the Time Circus started landing some shows around town, two of the members decided to relocate to Calgary. Their longstanding friendship kept the band together, but rehearsals have become more of a production since the move and they have to plan

their shows more carefully. The long-distance relationship has also put a damper on their plans to record, although they did find the time recently to record a demo. Like many bands, they padded their set with covers before replacing them almost exclusively with originals. The cover circuit just wasn't for them.

"We just got more satisfaction, I think, out of writing our own material," Antoniw says. "I personally am not into playing weddings and things like that. Maybe that's where the money is for working musicians, but myself, I'm in it for the art aspect of it. That's personally where I'm coming from. When I write music I just want it to sound original and like a product of my influences and our band's influences. I'm not interested in pleasing everyone right off the bat, because you're never going to do that. Hopefully we can slowly build a fanbase of people who are genuinely interested in the original music that we make."

**Nothing
at All**
with
the Hometeam
**Friday
Jan 30th**



TUESDAY

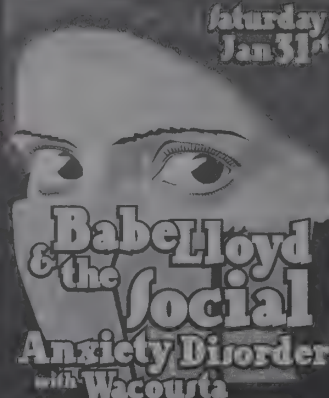


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WEDNESDAY



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& the Social
Anxiety Disorder
with Wacousta**

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The band's groovy fusion of heavy rock and funk is a result of their similar but far-reaching musical tastes. "We have our radar out in different directions," Antoniw says. "There really is a ton of excellent music out there. The world is not hurting for good music. You're just not gonna hear it on the radio most of the time." Not on mainstream radio anyway." (PD)

Behind the Curve

Coldspot • With the Sessions • Urban Lounge • Thu, Jan 29 When Coldspot enters the studio next month to record the follow-up to their 2001 debut *The Curve*, don't expect to find the band's frontman Floyd Cole sitting behind the mixing desk. "I produced our first album myself," Cole says over the phone from his day job at Homestead Studios. "It was a great learning experience, but I don't think I would want to do it again."

Instead, the band will hand over the producing reins to local luminary Barry Allen. "It's going to be a full-on record," Cole says, "so we wanted to get another set of ears in the studio. It just works better to have an outside producer rather than one band member trying to convince the others that their idea is the right one. It's so much easier to make decisions, and you can avoid the character conflicts and disagreements that can ruin the energy of recording a track."

With the members all performing together in the studio, Cole hopes that the band will be able to replicate their live sound, which has changed dramatically since *The Curve*. "We'd only been together for about three months when we recorded it," he says, "and now we've been around a lot longer and we've worked on our live show a lot more. We've also got a following now, which always helps."

Rather than picking the tunes ahead of time, Cole says the band plans to lay down 18 to 20 songs, and then select the best 10 for inclusion on the finished product. "We prefer to do it that way," he says, "because a lot of times, once you start recording something, it can really change the song." Needless to say, even with a staff discount, four months of studio time can get pretty expensive. Luckily, the band was awarded a production grant of \$10,000 from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. (JS)

Hello, Larrys

The Amazing Larrys • With ASS and Down for the Count • Stars • Sat, Jan 31 Although no one in the Amazing Larrys is actually named Larry, they do look pretty amazing on their website. Singer/guitarist Denis Komili is the spitting image of '80s tough guy Mr. T, while the rest of the Calgary four-piece could be mistaken for internet pin-up girls. "I'm glad I got to be Mr. T," says Komili. "It's a joke. Actually I only weigh about 130 pounds."

I guess you guys can leave your tossing loonies at home if you're planning to come out to the show; I suspect Komili's bandmates are about as comely (and as female) as he is musclebound. They do, however, play bouncy, irreverent punk rock in the

vein of Screaming Weasel, a comparison they've obviously heard before. "The first time someone said we sounded like them, it was a compliment," Komili says. "Now it's starting to get annoying."

Their debut disc, *Everybody Loves the Amazing Larrys*, came out on Calgary's Triple Threat Records just over a year ago. Since then, they've recorded a follow-up, but they're still busy deciding whether or not to add a few more tracks before they release it. In the meantime, they have a track on the recent *Fuckin' Eh! Vol. 2* compilation. Their songs are simple, often sarcastic little ditties, miles away from the maudlin musings of most current "pop punk." "I write really simple songs," Komili says. "That's the way I like it. I don't like much of these punk bands that are around now. I don't dig that stuff at all. I just string together two catchy riffs and something you can sing along to and get stuck in your head for a chorus and there you go." (PD)

Workaholic support group

Despistado • With Our Mercury • Seedy's • Thu, Feb 5 Isn't winter supposed to be the time of the year when everybody turns into a hermit and spends four months locked in front of the television, eating potato chips and watching *Baywatch Nights* reruns? Not if you're Regina-based rockers Despistado—the band is using the coldest time of the year to embark on their most ambitious bout of band business yet. How's this grab you? The group's Edmonton appearance next

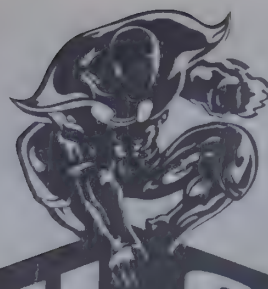
David Morales • *The Standard* • Thu, Jan 22 • *reVUE* While Mayor Bill Smith is busy trying to kill Edmonton's two remaining after-hours clubs, crews like Connected Entertainment are breathing life back into the bar scene. New York City's king of house, David Morales, managed to find time in his hectic globetrotting schedule to spin some vinyl for a packed room last week. His set started out slowly (but soon picked up tempo and the swankily dressed crowd eagerly swung their gyrating hips in time to the ever-changing beats. It's obvious Edmonton still has a house appetite for all that. The *reVUE* crew was back in the house to keep the party twice the bars close? I suggest Mayor Bill's house. He's a nice guy—he won't mind a few hundred sweaty bodies in his living room. (PD)

Thursday is part of a string of dates leading to Vancouver, where the young quartet has studio time booked with producer Phil Ek (Built to Spill, Modest Mouse, Pretty Girls Make Graves) to record their debut LP.

However, according to Despistado frontman Dagan Harding, that's only the beginning. "We're touring out to Vancouver," he says, "spending 10 days in the studio, then we're touring out to Toronto for Canadian Music Week, and then driving back to Vancouver to mix the record. From there, we're flying to [Austin, Texas] for South by Southwest, then flying back to Vancouver and driving home." Phew.

Not that we should be worried about the young quartet's energy level. Since forming two years ago, the band has made a quick transition from fledgling local kids to experienced touring band, with a national tour and several regional swings already under their belts in support of their 2003 EP *The Emergency Response*. But how did a band from Regina hook up with a famed indie rock producer from Seattle? "We made a list of producers that we wanted to work with," Harding says, "and a friend of ours sent copies of our EP out to all of them. Phil Ek contacted us and said he'd be interested in working with us, so we decided to head out to Vancouver to do our record. We're going to try and do 12 songs, but we still don't have all the preproduction ideas finished yet, so it might be kind of tough."

Judging by the band's work ethic, finishing the record on time should be a breeze. (JS)



NEW CITY
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Fri. Jan 30th
2 Live Crew
Politix Live
DJ Instigate

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FACTORY
\$2.00 HIBALLS ALL NIGHT!
\$2.50 JAGER SHOTS!
NO COVER!!

Fri. Feb. 6th
Iraqi Adopt A Town Benefit show
10 Second Epic
Mark Birtles Project
Rick from Half Cut
Just \$5 Cover!!!

Fri. Feb. 13th
St. Valentines Day Massacre!
20's/30's Gangster Party
Lounge Singers! Burlesque Show!

Fri. Feb. 20th
The Kasuals
Black Market Inc.
The Blame Its

Fri. March 5th
Uncas Old Boys
The Agriculture Club
& E-towns' Grassroots Deviation

Full Moon Folk Club



Winter / Spring
2004

Friday February 6

LYNN MILES
(ON.)

- Feb. 20 Down To The Wood (AB.)
Tim Hus & The Rocky Mtn. Two (AB.)
- Mar. 5 Annie Gallup (AB.)
- Mar. 19 Mike Stack Trio (AB.)
Joanne Myrol (AB.)
- Apr. 2 Stacey Earle & Mark Stuart (U.S.A.)
- Apr. 16 Kieran Kane & Kevin Welch (U.S.A.)

PLUS: Special Concert
Saturday, April 24
DERVISH

(Ireland)

Doors open at 7:30PM Show 8:00PM

All concerts held at:

St. Basil's Cultural Centre
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Tickets available at:
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(pick up or charge by phone: 420-1757)
South Side Sound - 10418 Whyte Ave.
(pick up only 432-7503)

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The Alberta
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Deadline is Friday at 3pm

THU LIVE MUSIC

ATLANTIC TRAP AND GILL
Penny's Whistle

BLUES ON WHYTE
Harold Brown and the
Bloodhounds featuring Pete
Turand

CAMELOT SPORTS BAR
Every Thu. Bill Jackson (rock)

CASINO (YELLOWHEAD)
Party of Four (rock)

THE COUNTRY SALON
Every Thu. Battle of the
Bands: 9:30pm; no cover

DUSTY'S Every Thu. Jam
hosted by Brian Petch

FOUR ROOMS
(DOWNTOWN) Bomba Trio
Subterranean

RATTLESLAKE SALOON
Justin Arment

STYVIE AND BUBBLES
Every Thu. Open stage/jam
with the River City Rhythm
Kings: 8:30-midnight

SHERLOCK HOLMES
(DOWNTOWN) Chuck
Belhumer

SHERLOCK HOLMES
(CAPILANO) Jimmy Whiffen

SHERLOCK HOLMES
(WEM) Tim Becker

SIDETRACK Stammer Jack,
Melissa Majeau and the
Muse: 9pm; \$7

URBAN LOUNGE TWO
Sessions, Coldspot: \$5

BJS

THE ARMOURY Lo Ball
Night: top 40

BILLY BOB'S LOUNGE Big
Mouth Entertainment

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE
Thump: in-tronica with the
DDK Soundsystem

ELBOW AND CASTLE
ON WHYTE Sleeman
Method Thursdays: hip hop,
downtempo with DJ
Headspin

ESCAPE ULTRA LOUNGE
Judgement Day with DJ
Judge Jules, Neak, David
Stone: \$15 (adv); tickets
available at TicketMaster

FILTHY MCNASTY'S Punk
Rock Bingo: with DJ S.W.A.G.

GAS PUMP Every Thu.
Ladies Nite: Top 40/dance
with DJ Christian

LONGRIDERS Hot Latin
Nights: free dance lessons 8-
9:30pm

NEW CITY LOUNGE
LOUNGE Rub-A-Dub
Thursday: rocksteady, dub
reggae with DJ Jebus and
the Operation Redication
Sound System

THE JOINT Fresh Fridays:
Urban by Urban Metropolis
Sound Crew

SHERLOCK HOLMES
(DOWNTOWN) Chuck
Belhumer

SHERLOCK HOLMES
(CAPILANO) Jimmy Whiffen

SHERLOCK HOLMES
(WEM) Tim Becker

RATTLESLAKE SALOON
Every Thu. DJ Butter

THE ROOST Rotating shows:
Ladonna's Review, Sticky's
open stage and the Weakest
Link game with DJ Jazzy sec-
ond and last Thursday: \$1
(member)/\$4 (non-member)

SAVOY Funk w/Bob
Trampoline and Ben

SEEDY'S Kicked in the Teeth
Thursdays with DJ Lloyd

THE STANDARD Spin
Thursdays: House with
Tripswitch, Nestor Delano
and Luke Morrison

VELVET LOUNGE Urban
Substance: hip hop/R&B and
of exams jam with Spryckle,
Invincible, J-Money, Sean B

YOUR APARTMENT
Thursday Night Shake Down:
Motown, northern soul, funk,
'60s pop with DJs Travyd and
Alex Zwolf

YARDMASTER MITE Tim
Merlin Factor (Toronto): 8pm
(door), 9pm (show): \$8
(member)/\$12 (guest);
tickets available at
TicketMaster 451-8000

ZENARD'S ON 1ST Kelly
Alanna

FRI LIVE MUSIC

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE
Mhath (Celtic): 7:30pm,
\$22 \$5; tickets available at
Arden box office

ATLANTIC TRAP AND GILL
Acoustaholics

BLUES ON WHYTE
Harold Brown and the
Bloodhounds featuring Pete
Turand

CAPITAL HILL PUB Soul
Food to Go

CASINO (EDMONTON)
McColl and Moorman (rock)

PIANO BAR: Every Fri. Jo
Ann Paul: 5:30pm-8pm

CASINO (YELLOWHEAD)
Party of Four (rock)

FESTIVAL PLACE Jerusalem
Ridge: 7:30pm; \$22 (theater
seating)/\$24 (cabaret
seating); tickets available at
Festival Place box office 449-
3378

FOUR ROOMS
(DOWNTOWN) Bomba Trio

HIGHRUN Mourning Wood
J.J.'s Righteous Mothers
(rock)

KINGSKNIGHT PUB Crush
Method Thursdays: 7pm
(door); \$4 (after 9pm)

LONGRIDERS Millions: 7pm
(door); \$4 (after 9pm)

PEPPERS Tim Cotton
(formerly of Rotting Fruit)

RATTLESLAKE SALOON
Justin Arment

RED'S Short Change, Eulogy,
Texas Blood Money

THE RIDGE Mr. Lucky
(blues, boogie, R&B):
9:30pm-1:30am; no cover

SEEDY'S Nothing at All, The
Humteam

SHERLOCK HOLMES
(DOWNTOWN) Chuck
Belhumer

SHERLOCK HOLMES
(CAPILANO) Jimmy Whiffen

SHERLOCK HOLMES
(WEM) Tim Becker

SHERLOCK HOLMES
(WHYTE) Boom Boom
Kings

SIDETRACK Kant Music,
Jinda McKee and her
Cheerful Lonesome
Twosome: Rodney DeCruo:
9pm; \$8

THE SUGARBOWL No Cuff,
9:30pm; \$8; tickets available
at Southside Sound 432-
7503

URBAN LOUNGE Firewater:
\$5

WUNDERSTUFF
COMMUNITY HALL Open
stage presented by the
Uptown Folk Club: 7pm
(sign-up), 7:30pm (music):
\$3 (door)

YARDMASTER MITE Tim
Merlin Factor (Toronto): 8pm
(door), 9pm (show): \$8
(member)/\$12 (guest);
tickets available at
TicketMaster 451-8000

ZENARD'S ON 1ST Kelly
Alanna

CLASSICAL

WINSPEAR CENTRE Tim
Masters: Presented by the
Edmonton Symphony
Orchestra featuring Anton
Kuerti (piano), Pavel Kogan
(conductor): 8pm; tickets
start at \$20; student/senior
discounts available; \$15 stu-
dent (rush seating) available
at Winspear box office one
hour prior to concert time
428-1108

ATLANTIC TRAP AND GILL
Acoustaholics

BETTER BE ROCK & ROLL
Sun of Man (rock)

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE
Black Dog: Retro Music:
4-6pm

BLUES ON WHYTE
Harold Brown and the
Bloodhounds featuring Pete
Turand

CAPITAL HILL PUB Soul
Food to Go

CASINO (EDMONTON)
McColl and Moorman (rock)

PIANO BAR: Every Sat. Jo
Ann Paul: 5:30pm-8pm

CASINO (YELLOWHEAD)
Party of Four (rock)

CRISTAL LOUNGE Affaire
Illicite: industrial noise, neo-
classical with Verlaag and
Xerxes

DANTE'S WORLD PUB
Powerhouse Fridays: dance
and retro with Zack and
Johnny Staub (Power 92);
Upstairs in the Skylounge:
soulful house music; over 23;
dress code

DONNA Silk: house with
Winston Roberts and guests

ESCAPE ULTRA LOUNGE
Freedom Fridays: House,
Euro house, club anthems
with The Peoples DJ

FILTHY MCNASTY'S Shake
Yo' Ass: with DJ Serial K

GAS PUMP Every Fri. Top
40/dance with DJ Christian

HALO Camaro retro with DJ
Davey James

THE JOINT Fresh Fridays:
Urban by Urban Metropolis
Sound Crew

SHERLOCK HOLMES
(DOWNTOWN) Chuck
Belhumer

SHERLOCK HOLMES
(CAPILANO) Jimmy Whiffen

SHERLOCK HOLMES
(WEM) Tim Becker

THE ARMOURY Top 40,
dance

BACKSTAGE VOICED BAR
Flava: hip hop with
Shortround and Echo

BILLY BOB'S LOUNGE Big
Mouth Entertainment

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE
Brendan's Sausage Party:
obscure indie rock with DJ
Ballhog

BOOTS Flashback Saturdays
retro dance, house with
Dernck

BUNNY'S NIGHTCLUB
Animal: dance with DJ
Arrowchaser

CRISTAL LOUNGE Urban
with Invincible Bomb
Squad and guests

DANTE'S WORLD PUB
R&B, Dance, and Retro with
Frank the Tank; Upstairs in
the Skylounge: soulful
house; over 23; dress code

DONNA Deep lounge house
with Sam Pillar, Bryan Beca
and guests

ESCAPE ULTRA LOUNGE
Evolution Saturdays: House,
retro dance

FILTHY MCNASTY'S Shake
Yo' Ass: with DJ D-Lusion

GAS PUMP Every Sat: Top
40/dance with DJ Christian

HALO House with Junior
Brown, Remo

Every Fri. DJ Butter

THE ROOST Upstairs: Euro
Blitz: best new European
music with DJ Outtawak, DJ
Jazzy and male stripper,
Downtown: female stripper;
\$4 (member)/\$6 (non-mem-
ber)

ROXY ON WHYTE Babylon
Fridays: retro/R&B/dance
with DJ Extreme

SAVOY Electronica with DJs
Bryana, Chris

THE STANDARD Triple X
Fridays: Top 40/dance

STARS NIGHTCLUB Winter
Dance Nights: With Robin da
Nates

STONERHOUSE PUB
Alternative, house, hip hop,
top 40 with DJ Rage and DJ
Weezle: 9pm

Y AFTERHOURS
House/trance with
Tripswitch, Sureshock, MC
Flopro, LP, Juicy, Derkin, Old
Bitch

YOUR APARTMENT House
with DJ Tomek

SAT LIVE MUSIC

WINSPEAR CENTRE Tim
Masters: Presented by the
Edmonton Symphony
Orchestra featuring Anton
Kuerti (piano), Pavel Kogan
(conductor): 8pm; tickets
start at \$20; student/senior
discounts available; \$15 stu-
dent (rush seating) available
at Winspear box office one
hour prior to concert time
428-1108

ATLANTIC TRAP AND GILL
Acoustaholics

BETTER BE ROCK & ROLL
Sun of Man (rock)

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE
Black Dog: Retro Music:
4-6pm

BLUES ON WHYTE
Harold Brown and the
Bloodhounds featuring Pete
Turand

CAPITAL HILL PUB Soul
Food to Go

CASINO (EDMONTON)
McColl and Moorman (rock)

PIANO BAR: Every Sat. Jo
Ann Paul: 5:30pm-8pm

CASINO (YELLOWHEAD)
Party of Four (rock)

CRISTAL LOUNGE Affaire
Illicite: industrial noise, neo-
classical with Verlaag and
Xerxes

DANTE'S WORLD PUB
Powerhouse Fridays: dance
and retro with Zack and
Johnny Staub (Power 92);
Upstairs in the Skylounge:
soulful house music; over 23;
dress code

DONNA Silk: house with
Winston Roberts and guests

ESCAPE ULTRA LOUNGE
Freedom Fridays: House,
Euro house, club anthems
with The Peoples DJ

FILTHY MCNASTY'S Shake
Yo' Ass: with DJ Serial K

GAS PUMP Every Fri. Top
40/dance with DJ Christian

HALO Camaro retro with DJ
Davey James

THE JOINT Fresh Fridays:
Urban by Urban Metropolis
Sound Crew

SHERLOCK HOLMES
(DOWNTOWN) Chuck
Belhumer

SHERLOCK HOLMES
(CAPILANO) Jimmy Whiffen

SHERLOCK HOLMES
(WEM) Tim Becker

THE ARMOURY Top 40,
dance

BACKSTAGE VOICED BAR
Flava: hip hop with
Shortround and Echo

BILLY BOB'S LOUNGE Big
Mouth Entertainment

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE
Brendan's Sausage Party:
obscure indie rock with DJ
Ballhog

BOOTS Flashback Saturdays
retro dance, house with
Dernck

BUNNY'S NIGHTCLUB
Animal: dance with DJ
Arrowchaser

CRISTAL LOUNGE Urban
with Invincible Bomb
Squad and guests

DANTE'S WORLD PUB
R&B, Dance, and Retro with
Frank the Tank; Upstairs in
the Skylounge: soulful
house; over 23; dress code

DONNA Deep lounge house
with Sam Pillar, Bryan Beca
and guests

ESCAPE ULTRA LOUNGE
Evolution Saturdays: House,
retro dance

FILTHY MCNASTY'S Shake
Yo' Ass: with DJ D-Lusion

GAS PUMP Every Sat: Top
40/dance with DJ Christian

HALO House with Junior
Brown, Remo

THE JOINT

Get a Nightlife:
Top 40/dance/urban

MANHATTAN CLUB

Saturdays: top 40/dance

NEW CITY SUBURBS

Saturdays: S.U.C.K.:
punk/alt/pop/dance with
Blue Jay and Nikofoe

THE ROOST

Upstairs: Monthly theme parties with
DJ Jazzy; New music with DJ
Dan and Mike; Downstairs:
Retro music; \$4 (mem-
ber)/\$6 (non-member)

ROXY ON WHYTE

Session Saturday: dance/R&B, hip
hop with DJ Extreme

SAVOY

Deep house with
Winston Roberts

STARS NIGHTCLUB

Metal Night: With Brian

STONEHOUSE PUB

Top 40 with DJ Clay

THE ROOST

Uncensored Saturdays: R&B,
hip hop, old school with
Urban Metropolis Sound
Crew

Y AFTERHOURS

Futureshock 2004: With
Tryptomene, Neak, Cary
Chung, David Stone, Kristoff,
Sweetz, Pete Wilde,
Domenica, Juicy, Troy Allen,
and more; 9pm (door); tick-
ets available at Foothills
Underground, Y Afterhours

YOUR APARTMENT

Nordic Foundations: DJ Dennis Zaz
and Rackman Powers

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE

Every Sun (9pm-midnight)
Reclaim: no cover

BILLY BOB'S LOUNGE

Hangdog Brown and the
Bloodhounds featuring Pete
Turkula

FATBOYZ

Every Sun (7-
11pm): Open jam session
hosted by Imaginary Friend
(blues, roots);

HORIZON STAGE

Memories of a Don Messer Jubilee
featuring, two time Grad
Master Fiddle Champion
Scott Woods; Maritime Tenor
Tom Leadbetter; Juno Award
winner Maine CoCo;
colourfully costumed Buchta
style Dancers and sensational
stepdancing; (3pm, 7pm);
\$30 (adult/senior)/\$25
(student/groups of +20)

O'BYRNE'S

Every Sun: Joe
Bird's Ine Jam; 9:30pm

SIDETRACK

Under the Covers Sundays
Mourning Wood, DJ
Dudemar; 9pm; \$6

CLASSICAL

SELECT Every Sun: Thomas
Mead (lute); 5:30-9pm

WINSPEAR CENTRE

Magic Songs: Pre-Tour Celebration
presented by Pro Coro
Canada: Richard Sparks (con-
ductor); 2pm; \$23.50/
\$33.50 (group rates avail-
able; student rush tickets
available on day of concert);
tickets available at Winspear
box office 428-1414, TIX on
the Square 420-1757

IRON HORSE

Every Tue: Celtic
night with Shannon Johnson
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MONDAYS

Jam with Tim Lee
and the Revelators

L.B.'S

Every Mon: Open
stage with Randy Martin,
9pm-2am

O'BYRNE'S

Red Shag Carpet;
10pm; no cover

SHERLOCK HOLMES

(WEM) Tony Dizon

SIDETRACK

Every Mon: Open
stage with Ben
Spencer; 9pm; no cover

DJS

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE
Indie rock with Penny and
the jets

DUSTER'S Every Mon: DJ
Dan

FILTHY MCNASTY'S

Metal Mondays: with DJ S.W.A.G

TUE

LIVE MUSIC

IRON HORSE

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KARAOKE

and DJ Tues with
Run Root Professional Music
Productions

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE

Digital Underdog

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB

Top 40 with DJ Stephan

CATNIP WHISKY CLUB

Bashment Tuesdays: hip
hop/R&B/reggae/dancehall
with Bomb Squad, DJ
Invincible, Q.B.

DUSTER'S

DJ "Name a
Tune" Dan

FILTHY MCNASTY'S

Twisted Tivia with DJ Whit-
Ford

GAS PUMP

Every Tue: Karaoke
contest with DJ
Gord

NEW CITY SUBURBS

Reurrection
industrial/EBM/electro/goth
with Nik Rofeelya

RATTLESNAKE SALOON

Every Tue: DJ Butter, two-

Singing with sharks

Punk entrepreneurs dive into the carnivorous live music scene with the Shark Tank

BY PHIL DUPERRON

While the city wrestles with the problem of how to revitalize downtown, two local entrepreneurs have taken matters into their own hands and given kids a fun new place to go.

The Shark Tank, a small all-ages venue nestled in a strip of pawnshops across 97 Street from the provincial courthouse, won't single-

handedly spark an economic upturn in the area but it will provide a much-needed place for punk and alternative bands to play. The Tank is the brainchild of Tracy Suter and her partner James Kuczmarski, who started Fresh Bait Promo while in Grant MacEwan's arts administration program as a way of helping bands market themselves. Opening a permanent venue to hold their

PROFILE VENUES

shows was the next logical step.

"Because we're both really into music we decided to promote bands," Suter says, "and that's when we were starting to cook up the idea of having our own venue, because

we didn't want to do the hall thing."

They originally picked a cavernous west-end warehouse, which was nicknamed the Shark Tank by its young patrons, to house their operation. Unfortunately, the high overhead costs and isolation forced them to shut things down a year ago after only a few months in business. But they wouldn't let the idea (or the name) die with the location. After throwing Sharkapalooza, a huge all-ages hall show, to raise funds, they reopened in the downtown location earlier this month. The new venue will be cheaper to run and, thanks to its central location, more convenient for kids to get to from all parts of the city. "We wanted to make sure we were more accessible to a wider variety of people," Kuczmarski says.

The basement band area is an ideal place for smaller gigs. It holds nearly 200 kids with a cozy stage, a generous dancefloor and a small area with couches for kids to chill out between bands. It's the perfect combination of homey comfort and versatility. Upstairs, there's an office and a gallery. Right now, Suter's own colourful photomontages decorate the walls, but they plan on running the space as a full-time art gallery during regular business hours. "Our grand plan," Suter says, "is to support emerging artists—visual and performing. So that's where the gallery comes in."

WHILE THEY STILL rely on well-known touring acts like Vancouver's Riff Randells (who make a stop at the Tank on February 8) to get people through the door, their main mission remains giving new acts a place to play. Even at the all-ages level, most Edmonton promoters only want to book established act they know have drawing power, a policy that leaves plenty of smaller bands out in the cold. But for Suter and Kuczmarski, the obvious excitement on the faces of a band playing its first gig at their stage is worth the risk of a low turnout. "You have to start somewhere," Suter says, "and we have to keep focusing on that—giving these kids a chance to play."

Once the place has a chance to establish itself, Suter and Kuczmarski plan on expanding the operation to include movie nights, karaoke and... well, anything else they think will get the kids in the room. For just a dollar more on your first cover charge you also get a club membership, and the pair have already handed out nearly 300. It's a way to make sure the crowd feels connected to the place so they treat it with respect instead of trashing it like so



many community halls. "We want to get to know these people," Suter says. "We want to know who's coming in here and we want them to feel like it's their place, so they won't shit in their own nest."

The prospect of inviting hoards of young punk rockers into their place of business might have seemed daunting at first, but the ambitious proprietors have been pleasantly surprised by how well the kids have behaved. "You just need to establish where you stand with them," Kuczmarski says. "When we first started running the Shark Tank, nobody knew who we were, recognized us or knew anything about what we were doing. There was no reason for any trust or any of that, right? As they got to know us by coming more and more, they got to know us on a personal level too."

NICEGUY, GEOFF HAWRYLUK,
SNIC AND IDROF

Shark Tank (10249-97 St) • Sat, Jan 31

VUE WEEKLY, CJSR FM 88.5 AND NEW CITY PRESENT:

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LIVE IN CONCERT!!!



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NEW CITY

1008 Jasper Ave. Patankin Plaza
call 429 CLUB for more info

Huun Huur Tu Throat Singers of Tuva

"The Tuvans will ride into your brain and leave handprints
up and down your spine." -The San Francisco Bay Guardian



WED FEB 04 PROVINCIAL MUSEUM THEATRE

125-1255-1255 or 1-800-368-3688

Patankin Plaza, 1008 Jasper Ave. Patankin Plaza

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Patankin Plaza, 1008 Jasper Ave. Patankin Plaza



classical notes

By ALLISON KYDD

Guitar town

This is rather a special occasion for said Edmonton Classical Guitar Society president David Grainger Brown. He introduced American guitarist Randall Avers on January 23. Brown met Avers 12 years ago in Miami, when the "cared young man" came in second at the Guitar Foundation of America International Solo Guitar Competition.

"I'm still scared to death," Avers, now 29, said with a cheerfulness that belied his words before launching into a program of Spanish and South American songs and dances, Gershwin's American cool, an arrangement of Rossini arias and the complex harmonies of J. S. Bach. The personable guitarist not only packs variety into his programs, but he also nuances stylistic differences. After all, Bach shouldn't sound like Gershwin, the programmatic "Cordoba" by Albinez or Mauro Giuliani's *Rossiniana*.

Classical guitarists, however, face the same challenges. First, there's not a huge repertoire to choose from. Also,

the instrument doesn't produce a big sound—but for local player and former rock musician Marcus Wasnea, that's part of its charm. "Listening to the simple melodies of the early Renaissance was what got me interested in classical guitar," he says. Though individual guitars respond differently, generally every note (and even the movement of the fingers on the fingerboard) is exposed. Fortunately, the smacks and squeaks are part of the instrument's mystique, and some performers exploit the effect.

This week, Brown himself was featured at Music Wednesdays at Noon, and there's more guitar to come: there's Edmontonian Caesar Zmyslowski on March 26 and the Montreal Guitar Trio on May 7, both at Muttart Hall. Also, on February 8, famed flamenco guitarist Paco de Lucia plays at the Winspear.

Last Saturday night, however, Muttart Hall reverberated with quite a different instrument as *SaxAlive!* demonstrated some of the versatility of the saxophone. Most works on the program were new, which is definitely one way to solve the problem of limited repertoire. Conservatory of Music instructor Charles Stolte spent a lot of time at centre stage playing one of his own compositions—the world premiere of his "Slap and Split for Alto and Baritone Saxophones"—and others commissioned for him.

Next in the Edmonton Chamber Music Society series is the Baroque group Camerata Köln on February 28 and violin-piano duo Andrew Dawes and Jane Coop on March 6. Incidentally, Coop was a student of the famous Canadian

pianist, composer and teacher Anton Kuerti, who appears with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra Master's series this Friday and Saturday. Kuerti, who last performed in Edmonton as part of the 2002 Czerny Festival, will also play Brahms—the Piano Concerto No. 2. Born in Austria, he immigrated to the U.S. as a child and became a musical prodigy, playing with the Boston Pops at the tender age of nine. He moved to Canada in 1965,

continues to perform extensively and has earned many awards and honours, including the Order of Canada.

This weekend's Master's concert also includes Saint-Saens' Symphony No. 3 for organ and orchestra and the world premiere of Jeffrey McCune's *Aquamarine*. Pavel Kogan, music director for the Moscow State Symphony, conducts.

On Sunday afternoon, *Magic Songs* gives Edmonton fans an opportunity to

hear Pro Coro Canada in many of the works it will perform on its upcoming tour. The choir will participate in a series of concerts celebrating 50 years of professional choral singing in Canada and the 70th year of Canadian composer R. Murray Schafer. And for something entirely different, on Saturday night at Convocation Hall, *Exchanging Notes* features Western and Chinese music played on authentic Chinese instruments. ☉

MEET TRAPT IN PERSON!

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 3RD, 6:00 P.M.

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BEAR

FEBRUARY

HAIR OF THE DOG LIVE MUSIC LISTINGS

07 - COLLEEN BROWN

14 - ALUN PIGGINS & THE QUITTERS
EX. MEMBERS OF THE MORGANFIELDS (TORONTO)

21 - PAUL BELLOWES & THE DEAD CANADAS

28 - THE HOUSE DOCTORS

SATURDAY AFTERNOONS 4-8 PM
THE BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE 10433 HWY 16 N.E.



root down

BY JENNY FENIAK

Can't get enough of that wonderful Guff

No Guff • The Sugarbowl • Fri, Jan 30 John Rutherford and Dan Tapanila have been honing their talents as guitar maestros here in Canada for the last 30 years. Tapanila has worked with Danny Mack since the '70s, most recently on 2003's *Galaxy Cabaret*. He met Rutherford while trading off rockabilly guitar roles with the Ronnie Hayward Trio about four years ago in Calgary and they stayed in touch. But it was more than just uniquely adept playing that drew them to each other—both men also share an affinity for vintage instruments.

So a couple years ago, Rutherford and Tapanila reunited in Calgary and, under the name No Guff, began playing Rutherford's jug-band porch tunes on small body Martin guitars from the 1950s. (Rutherford occasionally pulls out a rare banjo/ukulele from the '30s as well.) They'd keep collecting even if they didn't need them for their No

Guff gigs, but as their most recent purchase indicates, they're hardly keeping all those old instruments behind glass.

"It's kind of silly," Rutherford says, "but Dan and I both bought expensive traveling guitar cases for our Martin guitars because we started traveling so much and flying—we played right out to the east coast last summer. These beautiful Carlton guitar cases—that's our big purchase of the year. It's funny because I think we got almost as big a thrill out of buying these new guitar cases, because they are the Cadillac of guitar cases. You go in and you choose the colour of the lining and you choose the shell and all the features, like [you're buying] a car. But it was fun because it meant we were really working hard. It's kind of cool."

The two have indeed been working hard, touring their 2002 album *They're Red Hot* and catering to demands from radio and television stations. They also recorded a song for a Calgary compilation called *Hold Your Ground III* which was released last November and hopefully will tide them over until they can get back into the Rocky Mountain Recording Studio in Calgary this spring to record a new full-length.



Throat matrix

Huun-Huur-Tu • U of A Fine Arts Building (Studio 27): Tue, Feb 3 • Provincial Museum of Alberta: Wed, Feb 4 It's an exceptional occasion when a musical group's sheer presence can inspire new and exciting sentiments—especially when the group isn't new at all. Such is the case with throat-singing ensemble Huun-Huur-Tu, from the Russian republic of Tuva. The group is halfway through their 14th tour of North America and will celebrate their 10th anniversary this March in Moscow.

Arguably one of the world's oldest forms of music, throat singing (*xoomei* in Tuva) was originally used as a means of expressing the surrounding natural landscape, animals and elemental forces. According to the group's press sheet, they've incorporated this idea into their name itself—Huun-Huur-Tu literally means "sun propeller," a reference to the vertical separation of light rays that often occurs just after sunrise or just before sunset. For Huun-Huur-Tu, the refraction of light that produces these rays seemed analogous to the "refraction" of sound that produces articulated harmonics in Tuva throat-singing. Throat-singers manipulate different muscles in their throat to produce two or more simultaneous vocal notes. (The lower, more guttural notes may remind some listeners of the sound of Buddhist chants.) Along with their incredible vocal talents, Huun-Huur-Tu plays a multitude of exotic instruments from their homeland including the *xapchyk*, a rattle made from the anklebone of a sheep and a dried bull testicle.

Aside from Huun-Huur-Tu's four studio albums, they've contributed their exclusive sound to a diverse range of projects, from Ry Cooder's soundtrack for the film *Geronimo* to a collaboration with Malerija, an electronica group out of Moscow. The group began performing in the Soviet Union during the 1980s as the Tuva State Ensemble, but according to their manager, Alexander Cheparukhin, worldwide interest in throat-singing and Huun-Huur-Tu in particular exploded after the fall of the Soviet Union. The group renamed themselves in the early '90s and have since toured every continent many times over. Now they're on the move again, promoting their latest record, *Altai Sayan Tandy-Uula*, which came out earlier this month. ☉

Megatunes

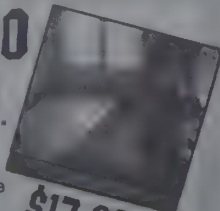
Your Music Destination

FOR THE WEEK ENDING JAN 22, 2003

1. Corb Lund Band – Modern Pain (corb lund)
2. Blackie & The Rodeo Kings – Bark (true north)
3. For You – Tribute To Compromise (united edge)
4. Steve Pineo – Around The Horn (stamp)
5. The Floor – Autonomy Off/On (the floor)
6. Lhasa – The Living Road (select)
7. Robert Randolph – Unclassified (darecords)
8. Fantomas – Delirium Cordia (ipacac)
9. The Swift's – S/T (riverdale)
10. Joe Strummer & The Mescaleros – Streetcore (hellcat)
11. Johnny Cash – The Man Comes Around (american)
12. Eddie Spaghetti – The Sauce (mid-fi)
13. Just Because I'm A Woman – Songs Of Dolly Parton (sugar hill)
14. The End – Within Dividsa (relapse)
15. The Lost Patrol – Songs About Running Away (burning heart)
16. The Unintended – S/T (blueeon)
17. Beautiful – A Tribute To Gordon Lightfoot (northern blues)
18. Viktor Vaughn – Vaudeville Villain (sound ink)
19. Al Green – Can't Stop (blue note)
20. Pinback – Offcell (absolutely kosher)
21. The Faunts – High Expectations/Low Results (faunts)
22. Paul Westerberg – Come Feel Me Tremble (vagrant)
23. Mojave 3 – Spoon & Rafta (4ad)
24. The Shins – Chutes Too Narrow (sub pop)
25. The Dixie Hummingbirds – Diamond Jubilation (rounder)
26. Electric Six – Fire (xl)
27. Outkast – Speakerbox/The Love Below (arista)
28. Iron & Wine – The Sea & The Rhythm (sub pop)
29. Guided By Voices – Human Amusements At Hourly Rates (matador)
30. Mark Lanegan – Here Comes That Weird Chill (beggars)

ANI DIFRANCO EDUCATED GUESS

Few indie artists (or "mainstream" artists, for that matter) can rival the body of work of radical folkster Ani DiFranco. Without the backing of a major label (or seeking it), DiFranco has gone her own way at every fork in the road and proven herself to be an inspiring creative force. Her latest album is on sale now!



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Honesty was the best policy for Toronto quartet Billy Talent

By JERED STUFFCO

When Billy Talent vocalist Benjamin Kowalewicz picks up the phone from a tour stop in North Bay, Ontario, he's standing in the exact same spot he was a year ago—same town, same venue, same lousy weather. Except there's one notable difference: instead of suiting up for the gig in a rented van or behind a stack of amps, this time Billy Talent gets a dressing room with their name on the door.

"A year ago," Kowalewicz says, "we were opening up for I Mother Earth and 30 Seconds to Mars on [the MTV Campus Invasion Tour], which was an absolute disaster. We were the first band, all the venues were about half-full and it just wasn't a very good tour. Now all the shows have been sold out and everyone's here to see us."

You could say that it's been a pretty good year for the Toronto-based quartet. Last summer, the band blew a fist-shaped hole in the Canadian music industry with their infectious single "Try Honesty" and a self-titled record that debuted in the Canadian top 10. Since then they've shared stages with their heroes Jane's Addiction and Sparta, criss-crossed North America and Europe and packed out Toronto's

2,000-person capacity Koolhaas.

With bands like Alexisonfire garnering mainstream support and thousands of kids emerging from suburbia sporting spacers, tattooed arms and tight black T-shirts, Kowalewicz thinks Billy Talent's rise has a lot to do with the current musical climate. "Five years ago, people were booing us off the stage and we were playing on Wednesday nights," he says in his endearing surfer-dude drawl. "Bands like At the Drive-In and the Refused really blew a hole in a genre of music that was kind of boiling in the underground, and then it all kind of all made sense."

Billy Talent's high-energy, up-tempo rock 'n' roll workouts have earned them obvious comparisons to

Pezz, the members of Billy Talent released the LP *Watoosh* in 1998 to a mostly unimpressed public. The quartet pressed on, and when they changed their name to Billy Talent (a character from Michael Turner's 1993 punk-rock novel *Hard Core Logo*) and released the four-song EP *Try Honesty* in 2001, things started happening. Propelled by Ian D'Sa's melodic guitar-playing and Kowalewicz's frenzied vocals, crowds stopped booing and record company men came knocking. "That's what started everything—the whole fucking fandango," Kowalewicz says about the EP. "It's been pretty fast. We put that thing out, released 1,000 of them, sold them off the stage and just got all the people's attention. It's really weird."

Though the current musical climate has been very kind to bands like Billy Talent, even in this post-indie punk, post-Fugazi, post-hard-core, emo-dominated rock environment, Kowalewicz isn't keen on pigeonholing what his band does. "I think we're a rock 'n' roll band," he says, "but everyone seems to want to equate us as something different. Pistol rock? I hear that one a lot."

"We've been called emocore," he continues incredulously. "I think emo is the sad little white boy, like [adopts mournful caterwaul] 'Wahhh.' Crooning. Like a Dashboard kinda guy. I think it should all just be called 'lame-o,' because that's what it is." ●

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MUSIC



street
vision

By SEAN AUSTIN-JOYNER

Crew intentions

You can expect to see a lot of jaws dropping when Miami hip-hop group **2 Live Crew** hits the New City stage this Friday. The group has made its way through Edmonton twice before, and both times crowds were treated to a highly explicit stage show, complete with lap dances, whipped cream and an interesting trick involving a bottle of water and a stripper. (I won't describe it—use your imagination.)

With a stage show that lurid, it should come as no surprise that 2 Live Crew has seen the inside of more courtrooms than a stenographer. They were even dragged before Judge Joe Brown in 2002 to answer complaints about their supposed tasteless behaviour at an all-ages party. In fact, 2 Live was one of the groups that first drew the attention of U.S. congressmen to hip-hop's often-racy lyrical content. (Many of those politicians, by the way, are now riding the "videogame violence" wave all the way to the ballot box.) Not only were the group's albums

banned outright from certain retail stores, but clerks have even been cited and fined simply for selling them.

Of course, censorship is an issue that isn't unique to hip-hop—blues and even classical music have felt the morality police breathing down their necks, too. Why, even Dean Martin faced the critics in 1951 over the suggestive nature of his song, "Wham Bam, Thank You Ma'am." But 2 Live Crew may be the only band in history whose censorship battles are more famous than their songs. The Parental Advisory stickers that still adorn CD covers came about largely as a reaction to the uproar over the Crew's raunchy 1989 *Nasty as They Wanna Be* album.

Did the headlines stop 2 Live from expressing themselves onstage? Not a chance. What all the attention did was boost album sales and sell out concerts across North America. Those stickers haven't discouraged other rap acts from following in their footsteps—one group even went so far as to call itself "Parental Advisory."

But 15 years later, how relevant is 2 Live Crew's music? Their shtick of shocking lyrics and X-rated visuals has become commonplace today. 50 Cent's "P.I.M.P.," a song about a smooth-talking hustler who has a knack for getting women to sell themselves on street corners for crumbs, was arguably the biggest mainstream hit of last year. Lil Jon and the Eastside Boys' "Get Low," another huge top-40 hit, was all about women... er, getting low; if you catch my drift. It boasted more perspiring genitalia

references than Chris Rock's movie *C84*.

But as anyone who's seen 2 Live in concert will confirm, they still have a knack for outrageous showmanship. And while songs like "Me So Horny" and "Face Down, Ass Up" may seem meek by today's standards, it's always interesting for the younger generation to see where vulgarity was born.

Fight for your right to Mardi

Censorship certainly won't be on the minds of the parade-seekers headed to Shaw Conference Centre this Saturday (January 31), where 780 Productions will be holding its second annual **Mardi Gras** party and parade. Promoter Fred Bailey says he's expecting a crowd with wildly varying musical tastes, and if last year's event is any indicator, everyone will walk away happy.

"Last year," he says, "it was a mixed crowd of all ages and ethnic groups. We were expecting big things, but it turned out better than we'd hoped."

Bailey is also the man behind the hugely successful comedy showcases, which took place periodically throughout 2003 and brought regulars from shows like BET's *Comicview* to Edmonton. While he's currently taking a bit of a break from the comedy scene, Bailey says he's starting them up again this March.

Doors for the Mardi Gras event open at 8:30 p.m. and the parade begins at 11 p.m., with an after-party to follow. Just don't forget your beads, as we all know where those lead. ☺

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By DAVID STONE

Future's Shocking

Futureshock 2004 • Featuring Tryp-tomene, Neal K, Cary Chang, Domenic G, Sweetz, Juicy and many more • Y Afterhours • Sat, Jan 31 (doors 9pm) Mayor Bill Smith might think that the typical promoter is nothing more than a drug-addled leech looking to exploit the city's youth. He's completely ill-informed, especially where a guy like Kris Wilkinson is concerned.

By day, Wilkinson is a network security analyst and software developer whose responsibilities include looking

after the digital affairs of corporations and organizations across the country. He pays his taxes. He has a business education background. And he also happens to really like electronic dance music—he likes it so much that he's made a name for himself as a DJ and a producer of hard trance under the moniker Kristoff, and last year he moved into promoting events with the successful debut of Futureshock.

This year's edition, which will take place at Y Afterhours on Saturday, is going to be different, Wilkinson says. Rather than include an up-and-coming DJ showdown, the entire event is geared around tag sets between many of Alberta's top players. This time, it's all in the spirit of fun. "I'm doing it because Edmonton hasn't had a party in almost a year," Wilkinson explains. "We took out the competition and paired everyone up because we just wanted to have some fun."

Many of the sets match up Edmonton's finest against their Calgary counterparts from house to breaks. "Look at the Oilers and the Flames—there's always been a controversy between the two cities," Wilkinson laughs. "Of course, it's a friendly battle. There's really good DJs from both cities and we all play all over the place—so why not bring them all

together and smash heads?"

Since Y Afterhours holds both a dancehall and an after-hours dance club permit, the venue can open its doors at 9 p.m. and run until 8 a.m. With three rooms running (including a nice chill space) and expert security, the party is a model of how this kind of event should be set up in Edmonton. Although Wilkinson is happy that he has an established venue to work with, he also wishes he could scale Futureshock up into the kind of large-scale event that used to happen prior to the city's clampdown on the underground "rave" scene a few years ago.

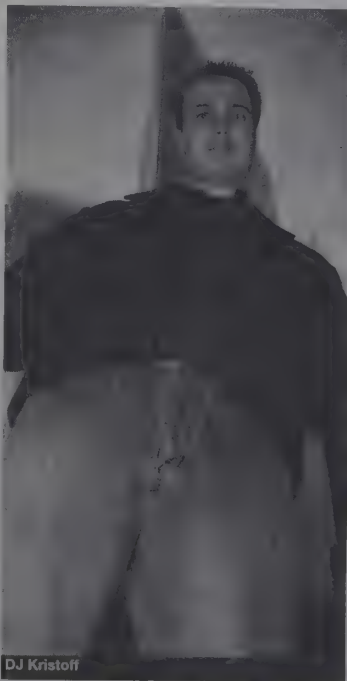
"The amount of money you have to invest to put on a party of this size is the equivalent of buying a new car," Wilkinson says. "You look at something like last year's Vinyl Fantasy party, which took place at Red's, with 2,000 people—you're buying a fleet of cars with the money it took to put that together."

Despite his respect and admiration for the police, Wilkinson is concerned about their regard for dance events. "I

rock concert or something, would maybe not even need a cop—they just need good security. That's just mind-boggling to me."

Regardless, Wilkinson is upbeat about the party. It's a fundraiser of sorts for WaysOfTheWikkid.com, an online entity that will not only serve up the latest singles for DJs, but also provide a venue to promote a new attitude toward electronic dance music. For the past four months, the site has offered a free batch of forums that have attracted more than a million hits, so it seems to be working. "I just want to have something that was professional, creative and fun," Wilkinson says.

As for Bill Smith and community concerns about club culture, Wilkinson hopes that they can be persuaded to take a more positive attitude toward the scene. "I'd like to see more negotiations," he says, "maybe a joint effort in reaching a solution [to the big issues]. That's what I'd want." ●



DJ Kristoff

don't think people realize that the biased opinion towards these events is really, really thick," he says. "Last year, they wanted a huge number of cops for one small event of maybe 600 people. The same-sized event, if it were a

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NEW SOUNDS

REVERIE SOUND REVUE
REVERIE SOUND REVUE
(INDEPENDENT)

How many times have you seen an indie band and thought, "Great band, lousy singer?" More times than you'd like to admit, probably. Reverie Sound Revue is a thankful exception—this band's got more chops than a steakhouse and vocalist Lisa Lobsinger's sultry delivery makes her sound like an interstellar version of Nelly Furtado. (This is a good thing.) There's some inspired songwriting here too, with guitarists Mark De Pape and Patrick Walls throwing out some pretty jazzy shit and meshing seamlessly with the stabbing rhythms of Bryce Gracey and John De Wall. RSR goes for the jugular on this EP, combining sophisticated boho songwriting with a nouveau production aesthetic that never seems contrived—in fact, its space age bachelor pad approach is actually kind of endearing. While it's not exactly my cup of imported Lapsang Souchong, there's no reason why fans of the Cardigans, Stereolab and Broadcast won't go

absolutely bonkers over this stuff.
★★★★—JERED STUFFCO

KINKY
ATLAS
(NETTWERK)

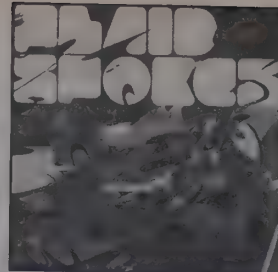
Leave it to a bunch of Mexicans to confuse everyone about what indie pop is supposed to sound like. While some bands might feel the need to pander towards a North American audience to get their attention or blather on about how they make "intelligent grooves," Kinky blithely switches between languages and lets their music do all the work. Which is fine, because that's where the real value in *Atlas* comes from. From the bilingual opener "Presidente" to the hypnotic "The Headphonist" (featuring Cake vocalist John McRea), the Monterrey five-piece builds its rock-solid electro funk out of traditional guitars, rubber-tight percussion and cosmopolitan imagination. One minute they're riffing on Talking Heads, the next they're sounding like

they're kicking around in a New York disco. If there's a barrier anywhere, it's the one beneath their feet. ★★★★★
—DAVE JOHNSTON

PLAID
SPOKES
(WARP)

Now that everybody and their little brother has their hands on a decent laptop and a pirated copy of ProTools, it's getting harder and harder for the old IDM dogs to blow our minds the way they did back in the early to mid-'90s. Released at the tail end of last year, Warp Records stalwarts and former mindblowers Plaid return with *Spokes*, their fourth LP and yet another collection of immaculately produced and stunningly conceived IDM tunes. It's all here: skittering breakbeats, ghostly synthesizers, mind-warping sound fx, all wrapped up in a stunning little package that screams, "This is classic Warp."

But while the production is hot, the whole concept just seems a little old. In much the same way that micro-



house dynamos like Luomo and Matthew Dear have turned to melody as a way of keeping the experimental techno fire aflame, Ed Handley and Andy Turner are at their best when they let the tunes do the talking—"Zeal," "Upona" and "B Born Droid" are all lavish creations boasting clean production and great arrangements. Just don't expect it to impress your little brother. ★★★ —JERED STUFFCO

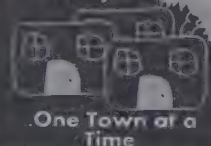
VOODOO CHILD
BABY MONKEY
(V2/BMG)

Ever since Moby took off into the commercial stratosphere, there's been talk that the diminutive New Yorker turned his back on the underground culture that encouraged him. Here, then, is the wee vegan's response—12 tracks of unfettered joy inspired by an epochal visit to an underground party at the conclusion of the 18 world tour. In the liner notes, Moby notes that all he wanted to do was make "a simple, straightforward dance record" and for the most part, *Baby Monkey* succeeds. Pulling from his vintage collection of synths and effects, Moby—under the resurrected guise of Voodoo Child—gallops through what ends up sounding like peak time at a rave. And that's the album's shattering fault. While electronic dance music has expanded its range, the attitude behind *Baby Monkey* belongs to another era. Still, there's a lot of unabashed passion here that might provide a brilliant foundation for other producers to remix. ★★ —DAVE JOHNSTON



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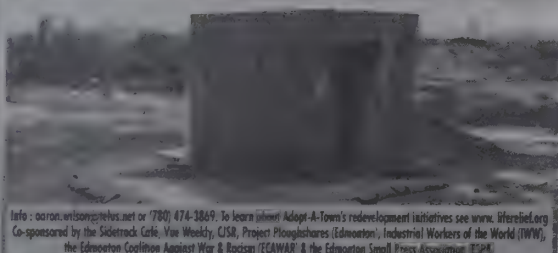
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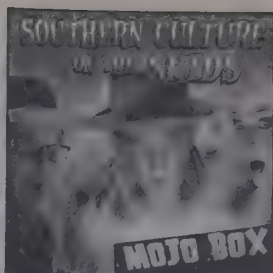


SOUTHERN CULTURE ON THE SKIDS
MOJO BOX
(YEP ROC)

After all these years, the polyester purveyors of southern-fried punkabilly swamp rock are still selling their brand of none-too-serious song-smithery, even if the white trash hillbilly shtick is wearing a little thin.

This kind of foot-stomping trailer park fun can only take a band so far, though, before they have to rely on musical ability. However, *Mojo Box* continues to move SCOTS toward soulful, R&B-flavoured tunes that require the band to exhibit strengths that they just don't have; this group sounds best on liquored-up hillbilly hoosegow parties like "Wet Spot." The only exception to the case is "The Sweet Spot," with its slow-as-Valium surf riff lurking underneath a Latin guitar.

Mojo Box is hardly a crashing failure, but it's yet another step in the

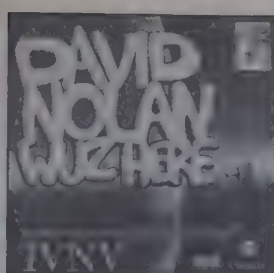


slow descent of this long-lasting band.
★ ★ —JAMES ELFORD

DAVID NOLAN
IVNV
(HAUNTED)

I'm sure that David Nolan has passion for his music. A lot of passion. Maybe too much. That's what makes the train wreck that is *IVNV* so much more tragic.

Nolan has a bad habit of overloading songs with poorly mixed noise, creating a wall of sound that, sadly, can't hide his aggravating and mostly incomprehensible vocals. The result is a spastic eclecticism set to music. It's a cacophony of guitar death warbles, pounding drums and whatever distorted noise Nolan happens to be making with his mouth. It's as if he hopes that if he makes enough sound nobody will listen closely enough to figure out if it's good or not. Not even Allah can't help this album. No. Seriously. He is listed as



playing the drums.

Even Nolan's attempt at a ballad ("Zepp Tepi") is physically painful. While it's relatively stripped-down (just a guitar and drums), Nolan can't help himself and adds a layer of gravelly mumbling that seems to be the "vocals" for an entirely separate song that only David Nolan can hear—perhaps intended for street derelicts with brain fever.

Aside from the terrible music, the album doesn't sound properly mixed—it's almost as if you can hear each channel separately, giving it a tinny, headache-inducing quality. The last song on the album, "Sixes," is the worst offender. Maybe Nolan was—God knows why—going for a lo-fi feel. But the result sounds like something being recorded next door in a sound-proof room. If nothing else, this album taught me something: a simple guitar riff isn't bad. A sonic wall of them, however, definitely is. —SAM LOWRY

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QUICK SPINS

BY WHITEY AND REGGIE

Dumptruck, *D Is for Dumptruck* (Rykco)

D is for dated reissue. Still, hearing this at a time when their peers were Falco and Huey Lewis would have been a breath of fresh air. A bit like early R.E.M. without getting all gay, bald and embarrassing.

P.O.D., *Payable on Death* (Atlantic)

P.O.D. gives an extended wrestling rock shout-out to G.O.D. An embarrassing album that made us all giggle a bit until we realized just how serious these God-fearing cheesedicks really are. If he'd been buried, Jesus would be rolling in his grave!

Teitur, *Poetry and Aeroplanes* (Universal)

Hamlet ain't the only melancholy Dane. Teitur Lassen delivers a fairly solid album of sweet Scandinavian fireside tear-jerkers. Curl up on your bearskin rug, sip some cocoa and have a good cry.

Katy Rose, *Because I Can* (V2)

If you taped Avril Lavigne to Liz Phair and pelted them with perkiness rays, you'd have Katy Rose. Benignly hummable guitar pop that breezes through you like tinsel through a cat. Not as shitty as I just made it sound.

The Proclaimers, *Born Innocent* (Persevere)

The guys who wrote that song in that goddamn beer commercial are back with a surprisingly well-written and convincingly performed new album. Lyrics are included so you can tell what the hell they're saying.

Shaye, *The Bridge* (EMI)

We grabbed this disc because we thought the band was called Shaved. Turns out, it's actually the Canadian female pop supergroup featuring Kim Stockwood, Damhnait Doyle and Tara MacLean. It's a sensitive debut, chock-full of sweet melodies and syrupy string sections. Nothing surprising here, just some well-produced Cancon MOR.

Tanakh, *Dieu Deuil* (Alien8)

Tanakh lilt and twist beautifully through eight moody tracks, each peppered with just the right amount of consonance and dissonance. Delightful contemporary folk musings all wrapped in Alien8's stunning packaging.

Kingsway, *The Typical or Universal Human Event* (Scratch)

Mascis meets Modest Mouse making mopey, mindful minor-key music. Mmmmm. ●

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 20

THE KASUALS



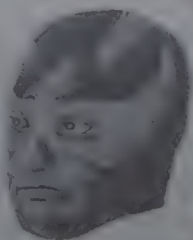
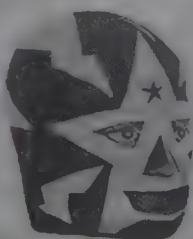
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CAGE MATCH OF THE WEEK

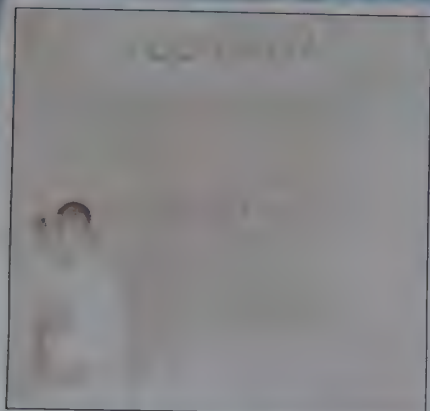
This week: Texas vs. The Texas Chainsaw Massacre

Texas's *Careful What You Wish For* (Mercury) sounds like Blondie and/or Garbage, whereas the soundtrack album from *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Nitrous) just sounds like garbage. Two discs at polar opposites of the musical spectrum, Texas's restrained guitar approach is refreshing while most of the bands on the TCM soundtrack manage to make evil sound boring.

RESULT: Texas by unanimous decision.



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Dohm yesterday

The Weather Underground tells the long-buried story of the '70s activists who declared war on America

By JOSEF BRAUN

The general consensus that the spirit or cultural phenomenon of the '60s died during the summer of 1969 is backed up with persuasive evidence early in Sam Green and Bill Siegel's *The Weather Underground*. Within weeks, the Rolling Stones held their disastrous concert at Altamont Speedway (an event documented brilliantly by the Mayles brothers in *Gimme Shelter*), the Manson Family perpetrated their vicious murders, the slaughter of the innocents of My Lai by U.S. troops was finally exposed and the poorly disguised assassination of influential Black Panther leader Fred Hampton was carried out. Following the murders of Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King and the escalation of violence in Vietnam, this single summer's outpouring of blood, lies and madness was arguably the catalyst that marked an idealistic generation's movement from spirited outrage to angry despair.

But the tempestuous climatic shift of 1969 is only the chronological starting point for Green and Siegel's film, which takes its title from a small group of young American activists who radically changed gears at the decade's end, collectively deciding that nonviolence was no longer an effective means of fomenting social change. The film documents the activities of the Weather Underground from an early plot to explode a bomb at a military base (which, in an eerie act of instant karma, wound up killing the conspirators) to the series of well-orchestrated acts of property destruction that made headlines throughout the 1970s.

Because of the caustic nature of the history it relays, it's initially easy to focus on what Green and Siegel's film is missing, such as a clearer portrayal of the relationship between the Black Panthers and the Underground, a closer look at Weatherman Bernardine Dohm's audacious advocacy of the Manson family or mention of the *New York Times'* unfortunately-timed piece promoting *Fugitive Days*, the "no regrets" memoir of the Underground's years of terror by Dohm's husband Bill Ayer—the piece was printed on September 11, 2001.

Yet, regardless of the degrees to which it's willing or able to provide viewers with the fullest picture possible, the Weather Underground is an indispensable work, one urgently needed not only for the parallels it draws between the past and present, but also as another reminder that terrorism is not something limited to foreigners but practiced by educated, middle-class, white Americans. Green and Siegel's film offers a grounded, succinct history, with lucid testimonials from former Underground members, some of them now in academia, some in politics, some in prison; sometimes these figures sound like figures out of Dostoevsky's *Demons*, but more often they provide sober insight. The film also benefits from exceedingly well-used archival footage that not only depicts significant events but also creates an evocative sense of atmosphere.

Green spoke with me from his home in San Francisco last week (days before the film was nominated for an Oscar for Best Documentary Feature), his generous comments revealing his ongoing passion for the project.

Vue Weekly: How did *The Weather Underground* begin?

Sam Green: As a teenager, the idea of these swashbuckling kids trying to overthrow the government captured my imagination. Then about five years ago, I met somebody who was part of the group and was surprised by how articulate and intelligent he was—I'd assumed they were all crazy terrorists. So I started going over to his house to talk about the group's story and realized it was actually a very complex story that raised questions about justice, social change and personal responsibility for your government's actions. All of it really resonated with me. And the more I spoke about the Weather Underground with others, the more I realized that most people under 40 didn't seem to know about them. They were a big deal at the time, but I think today's younger people never hear of them. That seemed problematic to me.

VW: I think all I really knew about them was their role in breaking Timothy Leary out of prison.

SG: Sure, and it's not just them but all the figures connected to them, like George Jackson, Freddie Hampton or the COINTELPRO program. All of this seemed important to me. Fortunately they seemed important to Bill [Siegel] too.

VW: Did you and Bill have a particular agenda in developing a historical context for the Weather Underground?

SG: Well, the more I investigated the historical context, the more what they did made a sort of sense. I wasn't at a point where I could agree with it, but I began to see why idealistic, intelligent young people did this. Our purpose wasn't to romanticize or condemn the group. We hoped that the moral ambiguity at

PREVIEW DOCUMENTARY

the story's heart would inspire people to examine their own relationship to the issues. To do this, we had to evoke the madness of that time—particularly Vietnam and the awful, calamitous nature of that war—and we also had to evoke the repression and the despair growing right here in this country. One of things that drew me to this story is the way it disrupts the caricature version of the '60s, where everybody was a hippie, protested against the war and then the war stopped and everybody got jobs and got into disco. That's being a little bit flip, but you know, it's important that stories like this challenge that myth, challenge...

VW: *The Wonder Years*.

SG: Exactly.

VW: The historical context formed in *The Weather Underground* does seem to reinforce the notion that where nonviolent revolution is made impossible, violent revolution is inevitable.

SG: Well, the person who says that in the documentary is Martin Luther King, paraphrasing John F. Kennedy, and the clearest example of that notion is King's assassination in 1968. At that point the Black Panther party really exploded. Most people agreed that everything King stood for

was great and that he achieved a tremendous amount, but the fact that he was gunned down exposed the limits to that approach of changing the system. Many figures in the Weather Underground had been protesting peacefully for years by that point and a lot of them were becoming disillusioned. You know, a lot of the Weather Underground were Jewish and for them the Holocaust was something that cast a strong shadow—it was only 20 years old when they were coming of age. The lesson we're meant to learn from the Holocaust is that people can't just sit by while their government did horrible things. So the Weather Underground had this expression they used a lot, about how they refused to be good Germans. They saw thousands dying every day in Vietnam, so the way they looked at it was that they had no choice: if you protest for four years and things only get worse you have to do more, even if that includes acts of violence. It's a provocative position, but one that's hard for me to entirely disregard.

VW: We're actually having this conversation the day after what would have been Martin Luther King's 75th birthday, and the timing is interesting because I think, as you're saying, the essential, unsettling question the film poses is whether or not nonviolent revolution is in fact an effective method of dramatic social change.

SG: It's so hard to know. Violence is a slippery thing, very difficult to control. In America we're always taught that only state-sanctioned violence has any moral authority, so using violence can make it very difficult to win people over. But after screenings people will frequently ask me what's the difference between the Weather Underground and Al-Qaeda, and I think the answer is obvious: after an early and truly horrible plan to kill people failed disastrously, they operated for many years making a point of not killing people. They focused on the symbolic destruction of property to make a political statement. In this sense they're much closer to the

Boston Tea Party, and those guys aren't called terrorists; they're called revolutionary heroes. Americans can't say that violence is not a part of our political tradition. It's been there since the beginning.

VW: With *The Weather Underground* circulating cinemas at the same time as Errol Morris's *The Fog of War* and the newly re-released *The Battle of Algiers*, it seems like audiences are developing an appetite for visions of the past that might shed some light on the present crisis.

SG: Well, these films are still kind of in an arthouse ghetto, but I'm happy that they seem to be broadening beyond strictly left-wing audiences. I don't know that a lot of Republicans are going to these movies, but I do think there are people who don't necessarily agree with violent revolution coming out and being exposed to these ideas.

VW: It's a token sentiment that events like September 11, events that "bring the war home" to American soil, have a sobering effect. Yet in reality, the aftermath of 9/11 shows the U.S. government to have had the opposite response: arguably, their actions read as being intoxicated with renewed imperialist force. I know you began this project five years ago now, but it seems uncannily well-timed.

SG: Well, I never meant for the film to be a trip down memory lane. I'm more interested in how the film interacts with young people today. I think history can be used in a very sophisticated way to comment on the present. I think great parables like *The Plague* or *The Crucible* say so much about the time when they were written, but they do so by allowing the reader to make the connection, to see the parallels, and there's no greater goal I could hope to reach than facilitating such a connection. For me, *The Weather Underground* is very much about the present. ●

THE WEATHER UNDERGROUND
Produced and directed by Sam Green
and Bill Siegel • Zeidler Hall, The Citadel
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The splinters of our discontent

Adrien Brody can't animate offbeat ventriloquism comedy *Dummy*

By BRIAN GIBSON

Greg Pritikin's *Dummy* is the sort of film fest fare that relies on a quirky concept, and little else, to draw audiences. You know the sthick: little person obsessed with trains moves to small town, man hired for his bad mojo around Vegas gamblers falls in love and loses his "cooler" skills, and so on. *Dummy's* gimmick is

ventriloquism. But like its mini-mouthpiece, as pleasantly entertaining as it often is, this ultimately hollow film sounds a few too many wooden notes and creaky jokes.

Steven Schoichet's kooky suburban family is harangued by nagging mom Fern (Jessica Walters, in a role

REVUE INDIE

virtually identical to the harrying matriarch on *Arrested Development*), who's always worried her kids aren't eating enough. Steven's retired father Lou (Ron Leibman) carefully constructs model ships while watching porn films. Sister Heidi (Illeana Dou-

glas), a onetime singer, is now a wedding planner whose own engagement to Michael (Jared Harris) fell through because he turned out to be a psycho. Steven's longtime high-school friend, Fangora (Milla Jovovich), is a foul-mouthed, mop-haired, punk tomboy.

Steven (Adrien Brody) finally summons up enough courage to follow his dream of becoming a ventriloquist and buys a dummy. Soon after, he's fired from work and applies for welfare while searching for work as an entertainer through employment counselor Lorena (Vera Farmiga). Amidst his bickering family, depressed sister, advice-yelling friend, Heidi's pleading ex and soft-spoken object of affection, single mom Lorena, Steven starts to find his own voice with the help of his timber-limbed buddy.

But it doesn't really matter how many voices are projected in *Dummy* if the movie's got little to say. Steven unburies himself to his unnamed mannequin, who also brings out the twentysomething's dreads and fears. But their self-deprecating stage routine is brought thudding down by lame jokes. ("What's eating you? Termites?") Brody's sad eyes and gawky face nicely complement the clownish, round-eyed look of his companion, but apart from an obvious parallel between Steven's little pal and Lorena's little girl, there's no creative tension or drama in the ventriloquist-dummy relationship. (At



Adrien Brody and Vera Farmiga in *Dummy*

least the doll doesn't come off as Chucky-level creepy.)

There's no great spark or depth to Lorena and Steven's relationship. But I guess, amongst men who stalk wannabe actors or shipbuilding oddballs, the withdrawn, nebbish Steven seems like a prize pick.

THE STRAIGHT-TALKING Fangora is a Ramones-ish bundle of nervous, raw energy escaped from a Crumb or Pekar comic. Jovovich dominates every scene she's in, spitting out her favourite phrase, "That's bullshit!", like a bullet. She also has the best comic exchange in the film, when she decides to turn her punk outfit into a klezmer band for the Jewish wedding that Heidi is putting together (Heidi: "But if I hire you, you have to be willing to hora." Fangora: "Oh, man, at this point I'd be willing to fuck anyone.") The final view of Fangora as a sort of goth cabaret klezmer wedding singer almost reanimates this petrifying Pinocchio of a film.

But *Dummy's* tone falters in its final third; dark moments with characters' mothers and a gun-waving climax mingle with a mock-heroic sequence, followed by a

"happy happy joy joy" wedding ending, capped off by an odd meeting between the film's two loonies (albeit in very different ways) figures, who definitely do not deserve each other.

And for Steven and his wooden doll, things end soppily ever after. *Dummy* is an odd vehicle for Adrien Brody (who's a bit too doozy and self-conscious here). He's been in other films where he didn't need to stand out amid a powerful story and strong ensemble cast (*The Thin Red Line*, *Bread and Roses*). In Pritikin's movie, though, his claim to fame comes in the end credits, where a note reads, "All puppetry and ventriloquism performed live by Adrien Brody." After a 2003 Oscar for his haunting performance in *The Piano*, if Brody's not selling himself short by starring in a passable, twee comedy about ventriloquism, he's certainly dummifying himself down a little. **C**

DUMMY

Written and directed by Greg Pritikin • Starring Adrien Brody, Milla Jovovich and Vera Farmiga • Zeidler Hall, The Citadel • Fri-Mon, Jan 30-Feb 2 (9pm) • Metro Cinema • 425-9212

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ODEON FILMS

John/Howard society

Film nerds rejoice as the EFS screens eight Ford/Hawks classics

By PAUL MATWYCHUK

Conventional wisdom states that there are two types of people in this world—or at least two types of film fans: John Ford people, and Howard Hawks people. In Peter Biskind's book *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls*, he talks about how Peter Bogdanovich and his first wife, Polly Platt, were united by the same nerdy passion for old movies, but divided over Hawks and Ford. "Peter liked Howard Hawks, Polly liked John Ford," he writes. "Their worst fights were over who was the better director."

Hawks and Ford—whose work will be celebrated over the next few months by the Edmonton Film Society—were born within a year and a half of each other (Ford in 1895, Hawks in 1896), and they both worked their way up the Hollywood ladder the old-fashioned way. Hawks,

a former car racer and pilot, got into the movie business after serving with the Army Air Corps in World War I and worked as an editor, casting director and assistant director before directing his first film in 1925. Ford began even lower, working as a set labourer, prop man and occasional actor (he played a Klansman in *Birth of a Nation*) before getting into directing in 1917. Both were hugely prolific, but

REVUE CLASSICS

while Hawks became famous for his ability to adapt to any genre—he made musicals, screwball comedies, gangster pictures, Westerns, detective pictures, science fiction and historical epics—Ford to this day remains synonymous with just one type of movie.

"My name's John Ford. I make Westerns." Supposedly that's how Ford introduced himself when he rose to speak at a famous 1950 meeting of the Directors' Guild. But as the four Ford films the EFS has chosen to screen demonstrate, Ford was simplifying things—his 1956 masterpiece *The Searchers* (February 16), whose unflinching look at the racism deeply embedded in the American soul seems

just as potent nearly 50 years later, is the only Western in the bunch. The series kicks off with *How Green Was My Valley* (February 2), a sentimental coming-of-age tale set in a Welsh mining village which these days is probably best-known as the film that beat out Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane* for the Best Picture Oscar back in 1941. (The film's depiction of the modern age rendering a 19th-century lifestyle obsolete, in fact, anticipates Welles's next film, *The Magnificent Ambersons*.) *Valley* suffers from the maudlin, sentimental streak that Ford's detractors tend to find insufferable, but it also has the same lyrical respect for traditions and communal rituals that would distinguish Ford's better films, such as *My Darling Clementine* and *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*.

THE OTHER TWO Ford films in the EFS series are less familiar titles: *Donovan's Reef* (March 8), a minor 1963 comedy that would be his last collaboration with John Wayne; and *The Last Hurrah* (March 22), a wonderful, underrated 1958 film starring Spencer Tracy as an old-school Boston politician who seems more and more like a dinosaur in the media-driven political landscape

Vermeer has two faces

Girl With a Pearl Earring is a visual feast but a dramatic fiasco

BY BRIAN GIBSON

Girl With a Pearl Earring, Peter Webber's adaptation of Tracy Chevalier's best-selling novel, imagines the story behind Johannes Vermeer's famous 1665 painting. Yet the characters on Webber's canvas are too crudely wrought, and too many scenes are tedious rather than nuanced and shaded. The picture itself is gorgeously realized and richly atmospheric, but the subjects within the frame remain still lives.

The story, as screenwriter Olivia Hetreed tells it, is something of a fairytale. Once upon a time (okay, in 1665 Holland), a girl leaves her house in the country to earn money for her family, fallen upon hard times. In Delft, the quiet beauty Griet (Scarlett Johansson) becomes a Cinderella servant-girl in a house where she is envied and picked on by the haughty mistress of the house and her nasty daughter. The lank-haired Beast, however, is also her protective Prince Charming and master of the house—he also happens to be the Old Master painter Vermeer (Colin Firth). Add a grasping mother-in-law, a suspicious head maid and the lecherous patron Van Ruijven (Tom Wilkinson) to the mix, and this bodice-ripper is bulging with stock characters.

Girl With a Pearl Earring is the sort of period romance that thrives on longing looks and knowing gazes. Johansson plays Griet as dewy-eyed

of the modern era.

It's Ford's embrace of an older, slower way of life that makes him more of an acquired taste to younger movie fans, and even I have to admit that I've got to side with Peter Bogdanovich and say that I'd rather watch a Howard Hawks movie any day of the week. Hawks's love of slangy dialogue, his loose, quasi-improvisational directorial style, his ironic attitude toward established Hollywood genres and his fondness for strong female characters have, for the most part, kept his movies surprisingly fresh—any modern director setting out to create a film that's funnier, smarter or more entertaining than *His Girl Friday* or *Rio Bravo* really has his work cut out for him.

The EFS is showing three of Hawks's very best films... along with a fourth, the Cary Grant vehicle *I Was a Male War Bride* (April 5), that hasn't aged very well at all. Grant is better served by *Bringing Up Baby* (February 9), the screwball comedy that set the template for every film you've ever seen about uptight men finding freedom while being tormented by kooky women—right up to the current (and, it goes without saying,

and deferential, while Firth cements his claim as cinema's best brooder. By the end of the film, their unspoken attraction, buoyed by a plaintive woodwind score, is tiresome.

To my untrained eye, though, the time is impeccably reproduced, from the grit of a meat market and dimness of a cellar to the various costumes, shoes and headaddresses of the Protes-

REVUE DRAMA

tant Dutch. The toiling Griet's knuckles are notably red and raw. The canals and stone houses of Delft have a painterly, two-dimensional quality to them. And cinematographer Eduardo Serra, in his spare and delicate shots, nicely imitates Vermeer's use of light and dark. In one scene, the sun sluices through trees as Griet and her admirer, the butcher-boy Pieter (Cillian Murphy), walk along a riverbank. The opening scene vividly mixes palette and palate, as Griet is shown carefully chopping and then arranging an array of colourful vegetables. As Van Ruijven says of one of Vermeer's works, "The illusion is perfect."

MY EAR, ALAS, was not so pleased. Lines like "Don't get caught up in his world" don't ring true. An episode where Vermeer explains his use of a *camera obscura* (a lens that artist David Hockney has controversially theorized many master painters used to better employ tonality and *chiaroscuro* in their works), complete with a modern-sounding explanation of optics, seems out of place.

The film picks up when it focuses on Vermeer's art, from his mixing of paints to the portrayal of Vermeer's profession as a stressful, endless

vastly inferior) *Along Came Polly*. In one of the great censor-dodging bits of symbolism of the Production Code era, Grant plays a henpecked paleontologist in search of a lost bone.

The Big Sleep (March 1) is, in its own way, just as deliriously funny an adventure as *Bringing Up Baby*—if anything, the dialogue (co-written by a presumably half-drunk William Faulkner) is even funnier, as Humphrey Bogart's Philip Marlowe unravels an insanely complicated mystery with only his well-developed flirting skills to protect him from danger. And in *Red River* (March 15), Hawks shows he could make a classic John Wayne Western with the best of them—whenever Wayne is in the same scene as Montgomery Clift, you can see two generations of acting squaring off against each other. Hopefully the Ford fans and the Hawks partisans in the audience will behave more civilly. ●

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churning out of paintings for his wealthy patron. But colour-by-number characters (Vermeer's flaxen-haired harpy of a wife is especially over-the-top) and the earnest romance drain the life from *Girl With a Pearl Earring*. As Vermeer paints Griet's portrait and the constantly pregnant Mrs. Vermeer grows hysterically jealous, the drama's final brushstrokes become predictable. The Dutch artist's famous portrait eclipses this cinematic inspiration, his 400-year-old work proving more lush and fascinating than Chevalier's homage.

Yet methinks this film may be the start of a trend. In the way that certain scenes in Julie Taymor's *Frida* mirror the Mexican painter's later creations, Webber's film is not just an artist biopic but an imaginary

recreation of an artwork. Such "bioartpics" may be the next Tinseltown fad—I can already envision Pixar's animated epic of how prancing, dancing clocks came to be melted for Salvador Dalí's *Persistence of Memory*. Mel Gibson will summon Michelangelo's masterpiece to life in *The Holyman of the Ceiling*. And there will be Terrence Malick's single-take, 90-minute exploration of *Wheatfield With Crows*, with Van Gogh's disembodied voiceover following the camera as it moves slowly through the sheaves of grain.... ●

GIRL WITH A PEARL EARRING

Directed by Peter Webber • Written by Olivia Hetreed • Starring Scarlett Johansson, Colin Firth and Tom Wilkinson • Opens Fri, Jan 30



Scarlett Johansson in *Girl With a Pearl Earring*



More fangs for your buck

Ginger Snaps II: Unleashed suffers once its heroine gets uncaged

By DARREN ZENKO

Roughly three years ago, *Ginger Snaps* rode to cult-hit status by coming at the werewolf myth with a witty, intelligent script that cut right to the heart of the matter by focusing on the true horror of the beast: those stalked by the creature may be terrified, but it's the human who undergoes the change—and knows it, and begins to love it—who is horrified.

Using lycanthropy as a thinly-veiled metaphor for menstruation reclaimed the lunar cycle from decades of macho film wolfmen, the whole thing was executed with a bloody black sense of humour that felt relevant in a way your run-of-the-mill small-budget horror flick (or flick of any genre, with any budget) seldom manages.

REVIEW HORROR

Ginger Snaps II: Unleashed picks up where the first film left off. The werewolf Ginger (Katharine Isabelle) is dead, but her legacy lives on in the mind and veins of younger sister Brigitte (Emily Perkins) as she lives a vagrant life on the run, desperately

shooting up vial after vial of herbal monkshood—a.k.a. aconite, a.k.a. wolfsbane—in order to delay her own inevitable transformation. When she's picked up off the streets of Vancouver by the Authorities, her impressive tracks peg her as a junkie and she's thrown into an all-girl rehab clinic.

The movie's coolest idea is the concept of a monster-in-waiting being denied—for "her own good"—the one thing that can stop her from turning into a wolfbeast and gutting all the teen druggies and wayward waifs. The Catch-22s of clinical bureaucracy, the platitudes and banalities of institutional therapy as the wolf claws away at Brigitte's insides, the humiliations

SEE NEXT PAGE



Emily Perkins and Tatiana Maslany in *Ginger Snaps II: Unleashed*

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Directed by Sam Green & Bill Siegel



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—David Sterritt, CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

"A GREAT STORY!"

(The young, violent, and glamorous anti-establishment militants of the 1960s)
"TERRIFICALLY SMART!"
—Dave Karger, NY TIMES



THURSDAY TO MONDAY AT 7PM NIGHTLY

"AMAZING...ONE OF THE BEST FILMS I've seen this year"
—LARRY FORD

"Adrien Brody is flat-out fantastic!"
—NATHAN RABIN



"The real revelation is Milia Jevovitch"
—BETHAN WILSON

dummy

Some People Can Say A Lot Without Moving Their Lips.

ARTISAN

ODEON FILMS

FRIDAY TO MONDAY AT 9PM NIGHTLY

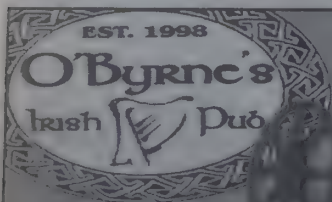
metro CINEMA

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All Metro screenings are held at Zedler Hall in the Cradock Theatre 9628 - 101 A Ave. For more information call 425-9212 or log on to www.metrocinema.org



PROUD SPONSOR OF
VUEWEEKLY MOVIE EVENTS

The belly of an archetype

In *Satin Rouge*, the way to a woman's heart is through her stomach

By PAUL MATWYCHUK

S*atin Rouge*, the debut feature from a young Tunisian writer/director named Raja Amari, is a simple film with a potent theme. Hiam Abbass plays Lilia, a fortysomething widow leading a life so empty of stimulation she feels practically 80. Just about the only people in her life are her teenaged daughter Salma, who's going through a sullen phase; a nosy neighbour, who won't stop offering "good-natured" advice about her parenting skills; and her brother-in-law, who stops by once in a while to eat, watch TV and express his disapproval of her. A beautifully economical opening sequence expresses Lilia's yearnings in a nutshell: we see her fastidiously doing the weekly dusting while the tinny sound of an Arabic dance song plays on a nearby radio; eventually, Lilia stands in front of a mirror and begins dancing, quietly watching her body move beneath her shapeless housedress.

Circumstances eventually draw Lilia into the world of a nearby cabaret where she befriends Folla, a belly dancer who performs there every night for the exclusively male clientele. And soon, inevitably, Folla convinces a reluctant but curious Lilia to climb into one of her cos-

tumes and join her onstage. Not only does Lilia become one of the club's most popular dancers, but she also arouses the romantic interest of a musician named Chokri—who, unbeknownst to Lilia, is also dating Salma.

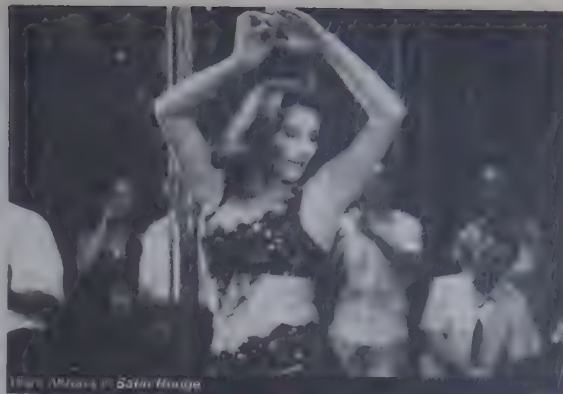
AS I WATCHED *Satin Rouge*, especially the scenes where we get to see Lilia dance, I found myself thinking about

REVIEW VIDEO

all the media attention that surrounded Demi Moore last summer for her "comeback" bikini scene in *Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle*. Moore's sleek, machine-tooled body is, by conventional standards, "better" than that of Hiam Abbass, whose hips have spread and whose waist has lost much of its youthful tautness, but there's an essential griminess to Moore's personality, a coldness, a lack of sensuality and *pleasure* in her own body, that makes her to my mind a pretty uninspiring sex symbol. By contrast, there's something much more potent in the scene where Abbass's Lilia bellydances in public for the very first time—her movements are hesitant at first (she barely moves her hips), but as the music builds in intensity, she loses her inhibitions to the point where she becomes almost ecstatically unaware of what she's doing. (Back in the dressing room, she's beside herself with shame; "I looked ridiculous," she says inaccurately, apologizing to the other dancers as much as she's berating herself.)

Satin Rouge isn't the first movie to

portray a middle-aged character as having sexual desires—*Something's Gotta Give* and *Calendar Girls* are getting praise right now for doing much the same thing—but it's easily the most realistic and least self-congratulatory of the bunch. There are no cheap jokes at the expense of Lilia's body (or that of Folla, her mentor, who's even older than Lilia and even prouder of the power she wields over her male audiences), and no self-conscious moments either where Amari pats herself on the back for daring to suggest that a 40-year-old woman can be sexy too. Amari doesn't do what an American director probably would and try to "protect" Abbass by shooting her dance sequences in bits and pieces and flashily editing together the most flattering images. Instead,



Hiam Abbass in *Satin Rouge*

Amari knows Abbass has nothing to be ashamed of, so she doesn't disguise what Abbass really looks like when she dances. As it happens, she looks pretty great, and there's an erotic quality to these sequences (as well as a terrific, steamy sex scene between Lilia and Chokri) that would be

unusual in a Hollywood movie, let alone a picture from a "repressed" Arab country like Tunisia. **C**

SATIN ROUGE

Written and directed by Raja Amari • Starring Hiam Abbass, Monia Hichri and Hend El Fahem • Now on video

Ginger Snaps II

Continued from previous page

and compromises necessary for her to get her wolfsbane fix.... It's the horror of *knowing* and not having anybody believe you, the horror of being rendered powerless just when you need to be strongest.

It's the horror of a good prison movie, actually, and it blends perfectly with the transformation horror of the werewolf curse. I got excited when I thought that's where *Unleashed* was headed; the potential was great for a werewolf-meets-girls-behind-bars movie, and the opportunities for clever horror seemed endless. We're teased with some interesting characters and some interesting social dynamics... but the rehab clinic, it turns out, is "just passing through" territory for Brigitte and her creepy acquired sidekick, Ghost (Tatiana Maslany). As soon as they can rig the (icky, creepy, effective) scam, the movie abandons the rehab center for the standard-issue Cabin in the Woods, and all my dreams of *Caged Heat* with younger girls and more mauilings are dashed.

MAYBE I'M HUNG UP—it's not like the decision to ditch the clinic wrecks the film, which if anything gets darker and deeper and better by

being able to focus on Brigitte and her relationship with the criminally insane creature that is Ghost. And who *really* needs another ensemble-cast horror film where characters die in more-or-less the reverse of their order in the credits anyway? This way, at least, we get to enjoy Perkins and Maslany, whose performances are unquestionably A-level. Perkins in particular is a glaring, snarling, cowering, glowering, gasping revelation—watching her in *Unleashed*, away (for the most part) from the glamour of *Snaps*' stunning Katharine Isabelle, made me realize just how much of the first movie's energy she was directly responsible for.

So, I got a finely-crafted monster-movie sequel—darker, boasting more straight-up horror, but slightly less intelligent and witty than the first—instead of a jail pic. Ah well, I'll take that trade. Fans of shameless pandering won't go away totally disappointed, though; the "group therapy" scene where a roomful of blissful teenage girls engage in a little hands-down-pants "me time"? *Totally HOT.* **C**

GINGER SNAPS II: UNLEASHED

Directed by Brett Sullivan • Written by Megan Martin • Starring Emily Perkins, Tatiana Maslany, Katharine Isabelle and Janet Kidder • Opens Fri, Jan 30

NEW THIS WEEK

The Big Bounce (CO, FP) Owen Wilson, Morgan Freeman, Gary Sinise and Sara Foster star in *Miami Blues* director George Armitage's comic crime movie about a laconic Hawaiian drifter who is seduced by a beautiful woman into stealing a fortune from her lover, a corrupt real estate tycoon. Based on the novel by Elmore Leonard.

The Cooler (P) William H. Macy, Maria Bello and Alec Baldwin star in director Wayne Kramer's offbeat fable about a Las Vegas sad sack whose lifelong bad-luck streak miraculously comes to an end when he falls in love with a cocktail waitress.

Dummy (M) Adrien Brody, Milla Jovovich and Illeana Douglas star in director Gregory Pritikin's eccentric indie comedy about an under-achieving schlub whose career and love life begin to improve when he takes up ventriloquism. *Zeidler Hall, The Citadel; Fri-Mon, Jan 30-Feb 2 (9pm)*

Ginger Snaps II: Unleashed (CO, FP) Emily Perkins and Tatiana Maslany star in director Brett Sullivan's sequel to the 2001 feminist horror film, in which high school outcast Brigitte Fitzgerald is confined to a rehab clinic, where she must deal with her guilt over killing her lycanthropic sister as well as her own impending metamorphosis into a werewolf.

Girl With a Pearl Earring (CO) Scarlett Johansson, Colin Firth and Tom Wilkinson star in director Peter Webber's somber period film, set in 17th-century Holland, about a young woman who is hired on as a servant in the home of Johannes Vermeer and winds up inspiring one of the master painter's greatest portraits.

How Green Was My Valley (EFS) Walter Pidgeon, Maureen O'Hara and Roddy McDowall star in *The Quiet Man* director John Ford's classic 1941 coming-of-age tale about a young boy growing up in a Welsh mining town and watching the disintegration of his community's traditional way of life. *Provincial Museum Auditorium (102 Ave & 128 St); Mon, Feb 2 (8pm)*

The Perfect Score (CO, FP) Scarlett Johansson, Erika Christensen and Chris Evans star in *Varsity Blues* director Brian Robbins's teen comedy about a group of high school students who hatch a scheme to get perfect scores on their SATs by stealing the answers from the Princeton Testing Center.

The Weather Underground (M) Directors Sam Green and Bill Siegel's vivid documentary about the notorious, radical left-wing activists whose bomb-fueled campaign of violence against the U.S. government during the '70s landed them on the FBI's most wanted list. *Zeidler Hall, The Citadel; Thu-Mon, Jan 29-Feb 2 (7pm)*

You Got Served (CO, FP) Marques Houston, Steve Harvey and the band B2K star in director Christopher B. Stokes's hip-hop comedy about a pair of friends who must win a street dance competition in order to finance their dream of opening their very own recording studio.

FIRST-RUN MOVIES

Along Came Polly (CO, FP) Ben Stiller, Jennifer Aniston, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Debra Messing star in *Safe Men* director John Hamburg's romantic comedy about a man who must conquer his pathological fear of taking risks after his marriage falls apart and he falls in love with a beautiful but unpredictable new woman.

Big Fish (CO, FP) Ewan McGregor, Albert Finney, Billy Crudup, Jessica Lange and Helena Bonham-Carter star in *Batman* director Tim Burton's whimsical fantasy about a dying man whose habit of spinning tall tales about his wild adventures as a traveling salesman has always infuriated his hard-headed son. Based on the novel by Daniel Wallace.

The Butterfly Effect (CO, FP) Ashton Kutcher, Amy Smart and Ethan Suplee star in writer/directors Eric Bress and J. Mackye Gruber's sci-fi mindbender about a young man who figures out how to travel back in time to his childhood, and who must return to the past over and over again to repair the disastrous effects his voyages have on his future reality.

Calendar Girls (CO) Helen Mirren and Julie Walters star in *Saving Grace* director Nigel Cole's fish-out-of-clothing comedy, based on a true story, about a group of British women who doff their duds for a calendar and a good cause.

Chasing Liberty (FP) Mandy Moore, Matthew Goode and Mark Harmon star in *Leave It to Beaver* director Andy Cadiff's romantic comedy about the teenaged daughter of the president of the United States who rebelliously ditches her Secret Service handlers and goes on a road trip across Europe with her new boyfriend.

Cheaper by the Dozen (CO, FP) Steve Martin, Bonnie Hunt, Hilary Duff and Piper Perabo star in *Big Fat Liar* director Shawn Levy's domestic comedy about a spectacularly fertile small-town football coach with 12 children whose home life becomes even more chaotic than usual when he takes a job at Chicago's Northwestern University.

Cold Mountain (CO, FP) Jude Law, Nicole Kidman, Renée Zellweger, Kathy Baker, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Natalie Portman star in *The English Patient* director Anthony Minghella's epic, episodic film version of Charles Frazier's novel about a Civil

War deserter and his grueling trek back home to the bride he left behind in North Carolina.

House of Sand and Fog (FP) Ben Kingsley, Jennifer Connelly, Ron Eldard and Shohreh Aghashloos star in director Vadim Perelman's moody adaptation of Andre Dubus III's novel about a recovering alcoholic and an Iranian ex-colonel whose battle for the ownership of a house leads inexorably to tragedy.

In America (P) Paddy Considine, Samantha Morton and Djimon Hounsou star in *My Left Foot* director Jim Sheridan's emotional, autobiographical film about a bereaved Irish family struggling to survive in a rundown New York City apartment while the father pursues an acting career.

Khaakee (FP) Amitabh Bachchan, Akshay Kumar and Aishwarya Rai star in director Rajkumar Santosh's action thriller about a team of operatives who are attacked while escorting a dangerous terrorist into custody. In Hindi with English subtitles.

The Last Samurai (CO, FP) Tom Cruise, Ken Watanabe, Billy Connolly and Timothy Spall star in *Glory* director Edward Zwick's historical epic about an alcoholic Civil War veteran who travels to Japan to train and modernize the emperor's troops, but decides to switch sides after being exposed to the honour code of the samurai warriors the emperor is determined to wipe out.

The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (CO, FP) Elijah Wood, Ian McKellen, Viggo Mortensen and Liv Ullmann star in the long-awaited concluding chapter of director Peter Jackson's epic film adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's trilogy of fantasy novels about a band of hobbits, trolls, elves, wizards and humans who embark on a quest to destroy an evil, all-powerful ring.

Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World (CO) Russell Crowe and Paul Bettany star in *Witness* director Peter Weir's waterlogged adventure yarn, based on the novels of Patrick O'Brian, in which 19th-century British sea captain Jack Aubrey and ship surgeon Stephen Maturin brave storms and cannonfire as they pursue a French "super-frigate" from Cape Horn to the Galapagos Islands.

Mona Lisa Smile (FP) Julia Roberts, Julia Stiles, Kirsten Dunst and Maggie Gyllenhaal star in *Four Weddings and a Funeral* director Mike Newell's drama, set in 1953 at Wellesley women's college, about a rebellious teacher who makes it her mission to ensure her students aspire to be more than socialites, hostesses and housewives.

Monster (CO, CA) Charlize Theron and Christina Ricci star in writer/director Patty Jenkins's sympathetic biopic about Aileen Wuornos, the troubled woman who in the '80s became known as

The big winners in this year's crop of Oscar nominees include *Whale Rider*'s Pishia Calish-Pukerua, who scored Best Actress nomination, Fernando Mereles's *City of God*, which scored four major nominations including Best Director, despite having dropped out of the race, and Sofia Coppola, whose three nominations for *Lost in Translation* ought to squish all those *Godfather III* jokes once and for all. The biggest snub? Probably Scarlett Johansson, who was touted as a possible debut nominee for her work in *Lost in Translation* and *Girl With a Pearl Earring*, but who instead was passed over completely. And somehow we doubt that the reviews she's getting for the new film (Monday SAT first movie) *The Perfect Score*, will do much to lift her spirits.

"America's first female serial killer," and her needy relationship with her emotionally stunted lesbian lover.

Mystic River (CO, FP) Sean Penn, Kevin Bacon and Tim Robbins star in *Unforgiven* director Clint Eastwood's moody drama, set in working-class Boston, about three childhood friends whose traumatic memories of the past are revived when one, now a police detective, begins to suspect another of killing the third's daughter. Based on the novel by Dennis Lehane.

Paycheck (FP) Ben Affleck, Uma Thurman, Aaron Eckhart and Colin Farrell star in *Face/Off* director John Woo's sci-fi action picture about an electrical engineer who must piece together the last two years of his life after his memory is erased by the sinister company that has employed him on a top-secret project. Based on the short story by Philip K. Dick.

Peter Pan (CO) Jeremy Sumpter, Jason Isaacs, Rachel Hurd-Wood and Ludivine Sagnier star in *My Best Friend's Wedding* director P.J. Hogan's film version of James Barrie's beloved children's book about three London children who travel to the mythical world of Neverland, where a gang of unaging boys do battle with a band of ruthless pirates.

Something's Gotta Give (CO) Jack Nicholson, Diane Keaton, Keanu Reeves and Amanda Peet star in *What Women Want* director Nancy Meyers's romantic comedy about a middle-aged rascal who re-evaluates his lifelong preference for dating much younger women when he finds himself falling in love with the middle-

aged mother of his latest trophy girlfriend.

Teacher's Pet (CO, FP) The voices of Nathan Lane, Shaun Fleming, Kelsey Grammer and Megan Mullally are featured in this big-screen version of the animated TV series about a superintelligent dog who accompanies his master to school in order to learn more about the world.

Torque (CO, FP) Ice Cube, Martin Henderson, Monet Mazur and Jay Hernandez star in director Joseph Kahn's laughably action-packed B-movie about a motorcycle racer who goes on the lam when he is framed for the murder of the brother of the man in charge of a dangerous biker gang.

Win a Date With Tad Hamilton! (CO, FP) Kate Bosworth, Josh Duhamel and Topher Grace star in *Legally Blonde* director George Luetic's teen comedy about the romantic triangle that arises between a vain Hollywood idol, the small-town checkout girl who meets him through a "win a date" contest and her best friend, who's always had a secret crush on her.

LEGEND

CO: Cineplex Odeon, 444-5468
EFS: Edmonton Film Society, 439-5285
FP: Famous Players
GA: Garneau Theatre, 433-0728
L: Leduc Cinema, 986-2728
M: Metro Cinema, 425-9212
P: Princess Theatre, 433-0728

GARNEAU theatre

8712 - 109 Street - 433-7728

"NEXT FILM OF THE YEAR"



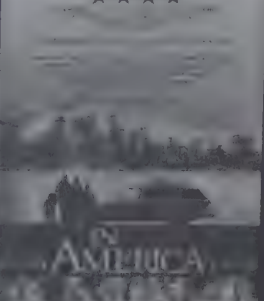
MONSTER

Nightly 7:00 & 9:15 pm
Sat & Sun Matinee 1:30 pm
18A (sexual violence, coarse language)

PRINCESS THEATRE

10337 - Whyte Ave. - 433-0728

★★★★



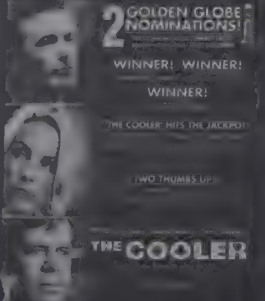
IN AMERICA

Nightly 7:15 & 9:30 pm
Sat & Sun Matinee 2:30 pm
PG (mature theme)

PRINCESS THEATRE

10337 - Whyte Ave. - 433-0728

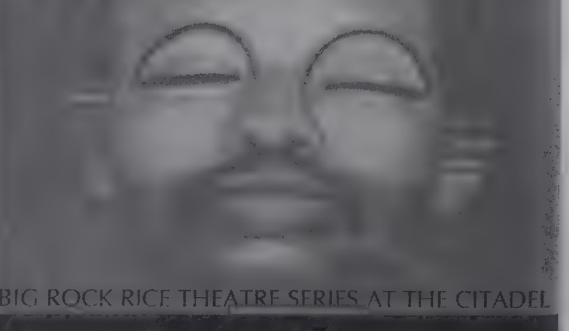
2 GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATIONS!



THE COOLER

Nightly 7:00 & 9:00 pm
Sat & Sun Matinee 2:00 pm
18A (sexual content, violence)

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FILM LISTINGS

Showtimes for Friday, January 29 to Thursday, February 5

All showtimes are subject to change at any time. Please contact theatre for confirmation.

GARNEAU

8712-109 St. 433-0728

MONSTER 18A
Sexual violence, coarse language. Daily 7:00 9:15 Sat Sun 1:30 Feb. 4: No 7pm show

PRINCESS

10337-82 Ave. 433-0728

THE COOLER 18A
Sexual content, violence. Daily 7:00 9:00 Sat Sun 2:00

IN AMERICA PG
Mature theme. Daily 7:15 9:30 Sat Sun 2:30

METRO CINEMA

9828-101A Ave., Citadel Theatre. 425-9212

THE WEATHER UNDERGROUND 18A
Fri-Mon 7:00

DUMMY STC
Fri-Mon 9:00

SPOTLIGHT ON GARINÉ TOROSSIAN STC
Thu 7:00

GRANDIN THEATRE

Grandin Mall, Sir Winston Churchill Ave., St. Albert. 458-9922

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 14A
Violence, frightening scenes. Daily 1:30 7:10

PETER PAN PG
Daily 12:45 3:10

BIG FISH PG
Not recommended for young children. Daily 6:40 9:10

ALONG CAME POLLY PG
Crude content. Daily 1:15 3:15 7:15 9:15

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN G
Daily 1:00 3:30

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT 18A
Disturbing content, violence. Daily 6:50 9:20

THE PERFECT SCORE PG
Coarse language. Daily 12:50 3:00 7:00 9:00

LEDUC CINEMAS

4702-55 St. 946-7729

WIN A DATE WITH TAD HAMILTON! PG
Daily 7:10 9:15 Fri Sat Sun 1:10 3:30

ALONG CAME POLLY PG
Crude content. Daily 7:05 9:10 Fri Sat Sun 1:15 3:15

BIG FISH PG
Not recommended for young children. Daily 7:00 9:25 Fri Sat Sun 1:00 3:25

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT 18A
Disturbing content, violence. Daily 7:20 9:30 Fri Sat Sun matinee

TEACHER'S PET G
Daily 8:00 Fri Sat Sun 1:20 3:10

WETASKIWIN CINEMAS

(1) 780-352-3922

BIG FISH PG
Not recommended for young children. Daily 7:10 9:30 Sat Sun 1:10 3:40

ALONG CAME POLLY PG
Crude content. Daily 6:50 9:00 Sat Sun 1:05 3:00

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT 18A
Disturbing content, violence. Daily 7:20 9:30

TEACHER'S PET G
Daily 7:20 9:30

WIN A DATE WITH TAD HAMILTON! PG
Daily 7:00 9:20 Sat Sun 1:00 3:15

CINEREX GREEN CENTRAL 18A
Disturbing content, violence. Daily 7:20 9:30

CINEMA GUIDE

10992-102 Ave. 421-7007

ALONG CAME POLLY PG
Crude content. Daily 12:30 2:40 4:50 7:20 9:30

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 14A
Violence, frightening scenes. Daily 1:40 7:30

CALENDAR GIRLS PG
Nudity. Daily 1:30 4:10 6:40 9:10

BIG FISH PG
Not recommended for young children. Daily 1:00 3:50 7:10 10:10

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

Disturbing content, violence. Daily 1:20 4:00 6:50 9:50

WIN A DATE WITH TAD HAMILTON! PG
Daily 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:20

MYSTIC RIVER

Coarse language. Daily 12:45 3:45 6:45 10:00

GIRL WITH A PEARL EARRING PG
Daily 12:50 3:30 7:00 9:20

MASTER AND COMMANDER: THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD 14A
Violence. Daily 12:20 3:20 6:30 9:40

WEST MALL 8

8882-170 St. 444-1829

LOST IN TRANSLATION 14A
Fri Mon-Thu 7:20 9:40 Sat-Sun 2:20 4:40 7:20 9:40

GOTHICA 18A
Violence, disturbing content. Daily 9:10

HONEY PG
Daily 9:20

HOUSE OF SAND AND FOG 18A
Disturbing content. Fri Mon-Thu 7:05 9:45 Sat Sun 1:30 4:15 7:05 9:45

LOVE ACTUALLY PG
Sexual content. Fri Mon-Thu 6:30 9:15 Sat-Sun 2:30 6:30 9:15

PETER PAN PG
Fri Mon-Thu 6:40 Sat-Sun 1:40 4:10 6:40

ELI G
Fri Mon-Thu 7:10 Sat-Sun 2:10 4:15 7:10

CHASING LIBERTY PG
Fri Mon-Thu 7:00 9:35 Sat-Sun 1:50 4:25 7:00 9:35

PAYCHECK PG
Violence. Fri Mon-Thu 6:55 9:30 Sat-Sun 1:45 4:20 6:55 9:30

TORQUE 18A
Violence. Fri Mon-Thu 6:50 9:50 Sat-Sun 2:00 4:00 6:50 9:50

CLAREVIEW

4211-139 Ave. 472-7600

THE LAST SAMURAI 14A
Gory scenes. Daily 3:30 6:30 9:35

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 14A
Violence, frightening scenes. Daily 3:20 7:45

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN G
Daily 1:15 4:15 6:50 9:00

COLD MOUNTAIN PG
Daily 12:30 3:40 6:45 9:50

PETER PAN PG
Daily 1:10

ALONG CAME POLLY PG
Crude content. Daily 1:05 3:15 5:30 7:40 10

TEACHER'S PET G
Daily 12:50

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT 18A
Disturbing content, violence. Daily 1:30 4:00 7:10 10:10

WIN A DATE WITH TAD HAMILTON! PG
Daily 12:45 3:00 5:15 7:30 9:45

THE BIG BOUNCE PG
Coarse language. Daily 1:40 4:10 7:20 9:20

THE PERFECT SCORE PG
Coarse language. Daily 1:20 3:45 7:00 9:10

MASTER AND COMMANDER: THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD 18A
Violence. Daily 1:00 3:30 6:40 9:40

SOUTH EDMONTON COMMON

1255-59 St. 436-0000

THE LAST SAMURAI PG
Gory scenes. Daily 1:30 5:00 8:30

SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE PG
Coarse language, sexual content. Daily 12:40 3:30 6:40 9:30

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 14A
Violence, frightening scenes. Daily 12:15 3:00 4:45 7:10 9:10

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN PG
Daily 1:10 3:40 6:30

PETER PAN PG
Daily 12:00

CALENDAR GIRLS PG
Nudity. Fri Sun-Thu 1:40 4:20 7:10 9:40 Sat 1:40 2:20 9:40

BIG FISH PG
Not recommended for young children. Daily 12:50 3:50 7:15 10:00

18A

ALONG CAME POLLY PG
Crude content. Fri Sun-Thu 12:20 1:20 3:10 4:10 5:30 6:50 7:50 9:15 10:15 Mon-Thu 12:20 1:20 3:10 4:10 6:50 9:15 10:15

PG

WIN A DATE WITH TAD HAMILTON! PG
Daily 12:10 2:40 4:50 7:30 9:50

18A

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT PG
Disturbing content, violence. Daily 2:30 5:10 8:00 9:00 10:40

PG

GINGER SNAPS II: UNLEASHED PG
Gory scenes. Daily 12:30 2:50 5:20 8:10 10:30

14A

MONSTER PG
Sexual violence, coarse language. Daily 1:50 4:40 7:20 10:10

PG

THE BIG BOUNCE PG
Coarse language. Daily 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:20

14A

YOU GOT SERVED PG
Daily 2:00 4:30 7:40 10:20

14A

MASTER AND COMMANDER: THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD PG
Violence. Daily 12:45 3:45 6:45 9:45

18A

MIRACLE G
No passes. Sneak preview Sat 7:00

WEST MALL 6

8882-170 St. 444-1331

18A

BROTHER BEAR PG
Fri Mon-Thu 7:00 Sat-Sun 1:45 3:45 7:00

PG

THE SCHOOL OF ROCK PG
Fri Mon-Thu 7:30 10:00

G

Sat-Sun 2:15 4:45 7:30 10:00

18A

LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION PG
Sat-Sun 2:30 4:30

PG

UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN PG
Not suitable for younger children. Daily 9:00

14A

THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS PG
Violence. Fri Mon-Thu 6:30 9:15 Sat-Sun 2:45 6:30 9:15

PG

RUNAWAY JURY PG
Violence. Daily 6:50 9:40

14A

TIMELINE PG
Violence. Daily 9:50

14A

THE MISSING PG
Violence. Fri Mon-Thu 6:40 9:30 Sat-Sun 1:30 4:00 6:40 9:30

14A

DR. SEUSS' THE CAT IN THE HAT PG
Fri Mon-Thu 7:15 Sat-Sun 2:00 4:15 7:15

G

GALAXY CINEMAS @ SHERWOOD PARK PG
2020 Sherwood Drive, 436-0150

18A

SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE PG
Coarse language, sexual content. Daily 6:55 9:40

PG

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING PG
Violence, frightening scenes. Fri 4:15 8:30 9:00 Sat-Sun 12:00 4:15 8:30 9:00 Mon-Thu 8:30 9:00

G

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN PG
Fri 4:05 6:30 Sat-Sun 1:15 4:05 6:30 Mon-Thu 6:30

18A

COLD MOUNTAIN PG
Fri 3:25 6:40 10:05 Sat-Sun 12:05 3:25 6:40 10:05 Mon-Thu 6:40 10:05

PG

PETER PAN PG
Sat-Sun 12:20

PG

BIG FISH PG
Not recommended for young children. Fri-Sun 4:00 7:00 10:00 Mon-Thu 7:00 10:00

14A

ALONG CAME POLLY PG
Crude content. Fri 3:40 7:15 9:50 Sat-Sun 12:40 3:40 7:15 9:50 Mon-Thu 7:15 9:50

G

TEACHER'S PET PG
Fri 4:20 Sat-Sun 12:10 2:15 4:20

18A

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT PG
Disturbing content, violence. Fri 4:30 7:05 9:45 Sat-Sun 1:30 4:30 7:05 9:45 Mon-Thu 7:05 9:45

PG

WIN A DATE WITH TAD HAMILTON! PG
Fri 4:45 7:10 9:35 Sat-Sun 1:45 4:45 7:10 9:35 Mon-Thu 7:10 9:35

14A

THE PERFECT SCORE PG
Coarse language. Fri 3:30 6:35 9:25 Sat-Sun 12:30 3:30 6:35 9:25 Mon-Thu 6:35 9:25

G

THE BIG BOUNCE PG
Coarse language. Fri 3:15 6:45 9:15 Sat-Sun 12:25 3:15 6:45 9:15 Mon-Thu 6:45 9:15

PG

NORTH EDMONTON CINEMAS PG
14411-101 Ave. 782-2816

PG

THE LAST SAMURAI PG
Gory violence. Daily 12:20 3:40 7:00 10:10

PG

SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE PG
Coarse language, sexual content. Daily 1:10 3:50 6:50 9:40

PG

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING PG
Violence, frightening scenes. Daily 3:15 7:30

PG

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN PG
Daily 12:30 2:45 5:10 7:40 9:55

18A

COLD MOUNTAIN PG
Daily 12:00 3:20 6:40 9:50

18A

CALENDAR GIRLS PG
Nudity. Daily 12:50 3:30 7:05 9:45

18A

BIG FISH PG
Not recommended for young children. Daily 1:40 4:20 7:20 10:00

PG

ALONG CAME POLLY PG
Crude content. Daily 12:40 3:00 5:20 8:00 10:20

PG

TORQUE PG
Violence. Daily 1:00

PG

WIN A DATE WITH TAD HAMILTON! PG
Daily 1:40 4:00 7:10 9:30

PG

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT PG
Disturbing content, violence. Daily 2:00 4:50 7:45 10:30

G

GINGER SNAPS II: UNLEASHED PG
Gory scenes. Daily 12:45 2:50 5:30 8:10 10:25

PG

THE BIG BOUNCE PG
Coarse language. Daily 12:15 2:30 5:00 7:50 10:05

G

YOU GOT SERVED PG
Daily 1:50 4:10 7:15 9:35

PG

MASTER AND COMMANDER: THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD PG
Violence. Daily 12:45 3:45 6:45 9:45

14A

FAMOUS PLAYERS PG
29 Ave. Calgary Trail. 436-0977

14A

MYSTIC RIVER PG
Coarse language. Fri Sat Sun 12:40 3:40 6:45 9:35 Mon Tue Wed Thu 6:45 9:35

14A

COLD MOUNTAIN PG
Fri Sat Sun 12:00 3:15 6:40 9:50 Mon Tue Wed Thu 6:40 9:50

PG

PAYCHECK PG
Violence. Fri Sat Sun 1:15 4:05 7:10 Mon Tue Wed Thu 7:10

PG

La La La Human Steps' Édouard Lock continues to dance on the wild side

By JOSEF BRAUN

Losely inspired by a pivotal friendship choreographer Édouard Lock formed in his youth with two transvestites, *Amelia*, the latest work from Montreal's La La La Human Steps features a video of a doll-like, somewhat blank female robot in a black void, moving her limbs like a living dancer. Yet, unsurprisingly, it's when the living dancers imitate and comment upon the robotic movements in their own white funnels of space that Lock's trademark dizzying acrobatics and sharp, rapid gestures shine and the show's spectacular power takes hold.

Amelia's score features lyrics from the Velvet Underground's first record. Yet while Lou Reed's empathy for those living on society's fringes seems ideal for the themes that underpin Lock's deliberately non-illustrative choreography, the show works best when it slips past the boundaries of Nadine Medawar's airy, Julee Cruise-like delivery of the well-known songs and David Lang's music (which is much more John Cale than Lou Reed anyway) propels the dancers into complex, spinning crescendos, such as the awesome moment that brings *Amelia* to its dramatic close. La La La's real wonders exist in the absence of clear concept.

I spoke with Lock by phone last week before *Amelia* began its four-city tour of its home country, Edmonton being its second stop. He was quite generous, thoughtful and articulate and what follows is only a fraction of what was for me a very engaging conversation with a giant of modern dance.

Vue Weekly: Lately, some of your contemporaries seem to be easing away from the intensely hyperkinetic style that came to

characterize La La La and much of the best dance of the 1980s. This gradual softening of approach doesn't seem to have infected your work, however. Does it interest you to choreograph work that reflects your own changing physicality?

Édouard Lock: You mean, am I going to slow down? [Laughs.] Well, the speed isn't there just because I like to see young people whizzing around. There's a body image audiences carry into the theatre, one that's very static and feels familiar, when in fact body shape is not a well-known thing. Dance challenges body perception, reinstalling a sense of strangeness and mystery to the body shape. I enjoy speed because it interferes with the limited body image people tend to project.

PREVIEW DANCE

If the body you're looking at has enough charge and enough detailing, the information gets reversed and this other body image is being projected back at you.

VW: Is the energy that arises from a dancer's being pushed to extremes in itself inherently interesting?

ÉL: I take issue with the idea of dancers being pushed instead the dancer pushing themselves to extremes, because the idea of a dancer being a passive receptor to choreography is far from the truth. Every dancer brings something individual to the equation regardless of the similarities of some of their backgrounds, while finally the choreography plays much the same role that musical notation plays in a musical performance. But, to answer your question, reaching extremes is certainly important in dance because extreme behaviour is so suppressed by social norms in daily life.

VW: *Amelia*, like La La La's last piece, *Salt*, has you working with dancers en pointe. Is pointe solely of aesthetic or tech-

nical interest or is there something about this minimal contact with the floor or its verticality that interests you?

ÉL: I worked with *pointe* for a number of years outside of the company, and what I found interesting is that it highlights line—exactly the opposite of what normally appeals to me. Thinking shape tends to be linear, where I think of body shape as a more evanescent entity. I liked that I was working in an idiom that encouraged the eye to notice symmetry and balance, while within it I was placing tiny movements that were blurring that. I think the difference between *Salt* and *Amelia* is just that the choreographic constructions are denser and more complex. There's more movement.

VW: Yet people may be surprised by the moments of affection in *Amelia*.

ÉL: Well, fortunately or unfortunately, I think that has a lot to do with music. Back in '87, we were doing *Human Sex*, a piece labelled as pretty assaultive, at a festival where we were following the Bolshoi, who were using Khachaturian's *Spartacus*, a lovely score. I asked if they wouldn't mind rewinding the tape when they were finished so we could go on using their music but our choreography. Now, because the dancers rehearsed in silence their rhythms were firmly in place: switching the music didn't really change the dance at all. But afterwards the comments were really interesting—people said, "Finally, your work is taking on this subtler, nicer, more romantic feel." These things just make you aware of how powerful every element is in establishing what people walk away with, whether it's the music, the space, the day or even their own desire. ●

AMELIA

Choreographed by Édouard Lock • Performed by La La La Human Steps • Presented by Brian Webb Dance Company • Jubilee Auditorium • Thu, Jan 29

Something about *Amelia*

The league of extra-ordinary gentlemen

John Kirkpatrick and John Ulyatt are Irish bit players in *Stones in His Pockets*

By PAUL MATWYCHUK

In *Stones in His Pockets*, John Kirkpatrick and John Ulyatt play Jake and Charlie, a pair of under-achieving Irishmen who land cushy jobs working as extras when a Hollywood motion picture crew comes to County Kerry to film an epic romance set in 19th-century Ireland. (Jake, Charlie and most of their friends are cast as the downtrodden peasants who stand around in the background "looking dispossessed" while the leading star, Caroline Giovanni, falls in love.)

It's been a long time since either Ulyatt or Kirkpatrick was stuck in the chorus. Ulyatt is one of Edmonton's most in-demand actors following his charismatic lead performances in the Citadel's blockbuster productions of *Cabaret* and *Grease*, and the versatile Kirkpatrick has continued to distinguish himself in everything from *The Odd Couple* to Shakespeare to Stewart Lemoine in addition to directing

Fringe smashes like *Featuring Loretta* and *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*. Even so, the two actors—frequent co-stars ever since winding up in the same B.F.A. acting class at the University of Alberta—can identify with the sentiment that gets expressed many times throughout *Stones in His Pockets*, the idea that fame and glorious success is always tantalizingly just out of reach, over the next hill or somewhere in the nearest big city.

PREVIEW THEATRE

"As actors," Ulyatt says, "everyone always talks about going somewhere else or moving to another city—not necessarily making a fortune but thinking, 'I've been in Edmonton, now I've got to try making it in some other mecca,' wherever that mecca is. There was that whole thing with the *Die-Nasty!* cast going to L.A.; I wasn't part of it but I saw the repercussions with a lot of people, and everyone reacted differently. 'It might happen—I don't mind if it doesn't happen, but it might happen.' Whatever 'it' is."

"In some ways," Kirkpatrick says, "just by virtue of being Canadians, we can relate to this kind of thing all the time. We're always quick to condemn

Americans in a lot of ways, but when an American movie comes to town, we all want to get on it, we all want to have a part. And if Daniel Baldwin is coming to town, we all want to meet him—even though if Daniel Baldwin wasn't coming to town, we'd all hate Daniel Baldwin, you know?"

I'm sure Daniel Baldwin is a nice guy, but I'd like to see him try and tackle the challenge Ulyatt and Kirkpatrick face with *Stones in His Pockets*, which requires them to play not just Jake and Charlie but practically everyone else in County Kerry as well as key members of the American film crew (including the bewitching Caroline Giovanni, who meets Jake in a pub and invites him to visit her in her trailer the next day during her coffee break). It's one extra technical challenge besides having to master a proper Northern Irish accent—a task that caused Ulyatt particular anxiety, seeing as the Irish characters in the play spend so much time mocking the inaccurate accents of the Hollywood stars. "I've never done a Northern accent before," he says, "but I asked Siobhan, one of the crew members, who's Irish, what she thought of it and she said it was fine." (I debate pointing out that in the play, when Caroline asks Jake what he thinks of her Irish accent, he



John Kirkpatrick and John Ulyatt in rehearsal for *Stones in His Pockets*

diplomatically lies to her, saying, "You sound like you were born here." I decide against it.)

"I think there's more of a visceral, emotional kick what it's just the two of us playing all the characters," Kirkpatrick says, rescuing me from my dilemma. "I think you start to care about Jake and Charlie more that way; it makes the story more about all the different aspects of these two extras at the fringes of this big movie set.... Plus there's the fun of watching two actors having fun

together. I think that's one of the necessary parts of getting sucked into this play—the instant camaraderie of these two characters. And because of my relationship with John, how we've known each other such a long time, we just get there sooner." ●

STONES IN HIS POCKETS

Directed by James MacDonald • Written by Marie Jones • Starring John Kirkpatrick and John Ulyatt • Shactor Theatre, The Citadel • Jan 24-Feb 15 (opening night: Jan 29) • 425-1820

Orange bounty



Skillful performances, intellectually challenging writing give *Blue/Orange* its juice

By PAUL MATWYCHUK

It's appropriate that the most memorable thing about the Citadel's production of British playwright Joe Penhall's *Blue/Orange* is the way Eric Schneider pronounces the word "maybe." Schneider, playing Robert, a senior consultant at a London psychiatric hospital, fills the word with all the insinuating implications at his command: "Maybe what I'm saying is wrong," he keeps telling Bruce (Brendan Murray), the young doctor Robert butts heads with throughout the play, "but maybe—just maybe—it's true."

Blue/Orange is a play filled with maybes and perhapses and we-can't-be-sures. And at the centre of all this uncertainty is the question of what to do with Christopher (Seun Olagunju), a young black man who's been confined to Robert and Bruce's hospital after a mysterious incident in a fruit market and whose mandatory 28-day observation period is nearly complete. Bruce, an inexperienced young doctor with a fairly awkward bedside manner but a lot of idealism, feels that Christopher has "borderline personality disorder" and is clearly not ready to return to the outside world. Robert, however, airily dismisses Bruce's concerns, using a one-two punch of hippie-dippie R.D. Laingisms and tough-minded bureaucratism to argue that Christopher's delusions (including his belief that his father is Idi Amin) are harmless, that Bruce's insistence on labelling him as crazy is the result of a white cultural bias, and that the hospital doesn't have the money to spend on a bed for Christopher anyway.

As you watch the play, it's impossible to decide whether both doctors are right or if

they're both completely wrong. Christopher obviously has mental problems that will probably only get worse once he leaves Bruce's care, yet Robert rightly points out that if he's kept inside the hospital for much longer, he'll become "institutionalized" and even less able to cope with life on the outside. Robert may be full of baloney when he suggests that Christopher's behaviour, far from being "crazy," is actually a perfectly sane response to the reality of being a black man in a white-dominated society, but as these two infighting white doctors interview Christopher, each of them trying to impose their own interpretations of his case upon him... well, maybe—just maybe—they really are making him crazier than he was 28 days ago.

MAKE NO MISTAKE: this is a talky play—probably too talky. Many of the scenes, especially the ferocious debates between Robert and Bruce, tend to run around in circles after a certain point, and while that's undoubtedly the way these kinds of arguments play out in real life, it does get a little exhausting to watch them from a theatre seat. Still, Schneider's terrific performance as Robert does a lot to hold your attention—virtually every line he speaks expresses this character's fascinating mix of smugness, intelligence and total mastery of the inner politics of the British healthcare system. Another of the play's strongest suits is its insightful handling of the race issue. Neither Robert nor Bruce is entirely comfortable dealing with Christopher, and director David Storch lets you see that Robert's shallow demonstrations of friendliness and "understanding" and Bruce's earnest, fumbling attempts not to say anything offensive are really two sides of the same coin.

Of course, the Edmonton theatre scene is even more of a white monoculture than the British healthcare system—I could probably count on the fingers of one hand the number of black actors I've seen onstage here in the last four years. So it's exciting to watch a black actor like Olagunju tackling a rich part like Christopher, even if his performance concentrates more on showy bits of actors' business like his constantly jiggling leg than on Christopher's dawning awareness of the nature of the power struggle he's caught in the middle of.

It's also exciting to see a complex, challenging play like *Blue/Orange* programmed in the Rice Theatre Series, especially after the show that preceded it, Neil LaBute's shallow, cynical *The Shape of Things*. LaBute tells you exactly what to think about all of his characters, and none of it is good; Penhall lets you figure everything out for yourself—and then demands that you keep thinking good and hard even after you leave the theatre and step, slightly dazed, back into the real world. ●

BLUE/ORANGE

Directed by David Storch • Written by Joe Penhall • Starring Brendan Murray, Seun Olagunju and Eric Schneider • Rice Theatre, The Citadel • To Feb 15 • 425-1820



Last Train to Artsville

Flashbacks stoke the engine of Beth Graham and Daniela Vaskalic's art fantasy

By PAUL MATWYCHUK

Do any of you remember that old *Twilight Zone* episode called "Five Characters in Search of an Exit," about a ballerina, a soldier, a hobo, a clown and a bagpipe player who all find themselves at the bottom of a gigantic, featureless well with no memory of how they got there? And it turns out that they're all actually dolls that have been thrown into a big donate-a-doll-to-charity bin?

Well, Beth Graham and Daniela Vaskalic's *The Last Train* has kind of the same setup. At the start of the play, five women emerge from various hiding places inside a train car—we're in the dying days of World War II, and at first we assume these women are hostages or refugees or stowaways of some sort, although none of those explanations helps us understand why one is in a dressing gown and two others are wearing dresses more appropriate to the 19th century. But soon everything becomes clear: they're all figures from famous paintings by van

Gogh, Picasso, Modigliani, Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec who've climbed out of their frames to try and figure out where their train is headed and what will become of them once they arrive. (It gradually emerges that they were all exhibits in a Nazi exhibition of "degenerate art"; now they're part of a German officer's desperate plan to turn some quick cash on the black market and escape from the Allied troops.) In the process, we also learn about the lives (most of them unhappy) of these women and their relationships (most of them conflicted) with the artists who painted them.

Graham and Vaskalic, whose previous collaborations include *The Drowning Girls* and *Comrades*, love to write about actual historical events, but one of the peculiarities of their approach is that their plays tend to begin after everything important in the story has already happened. Curiously, the action in their plays tends to consist not of their characters living through events, but in their reliving them. It's as if Graham and Vaskalic find the act of remembering a traumatic episode from the past more dramatic than actually experiencing it firsthand.

Perhaps that helps explain why *The Last Train* feels a little static. For a play set on a

train, it prefers looking backward to hurtling forward. It's all about the slow revelation of backstory—how Dora Maar (Coralie Cairns) became Picasso's lover and muse, only to have him callously discard her once he tired of her; how the hugely pregnant Jeanne Hébuterne's (April Banigan) affair with Modigliani was not the starry-eyed romance she likes to describe it as; how the middle-class Marguerite de Gas (Maralyn Ryan) wound up living out her final years, lonely, poor and depressed, in Buenos Aires. While these flashbacks are fascinating and occasionally quite moving, the action that frames them (i.e., all the stuff with the women interacting in the train car) tend to strike the same notes over and over again—Dora bickering with Jeanne, the Lautrec prostitute Madame Poupoule (Annette Loiseau) offending Marguerite with her frank language, and Adeline (Celina Stachow), a foolish teenaged girl who once posed for van Gogh, struggling to understand what everyone's talking about. And every once in a while, the German officer puts in an appearance, causing the women to stop talking and scramble back into their inanimate positions like the toys in *Toy Story*.

At least (unlike the utterly tedious, similarly themed new film *Girl With a Pearl Earring*, which I'm prematurely declaring the worst movie of 2004), *The Last Train* has a playful sense of humour—especially when Dora has to defend her

"monstrous" appearance from the insults of her four more conventional-looking fellow passengers. Graham and Vaskalic have given these five actress wonderfully juicy roles and they all make strong impressions with them; Cairns is particularly good at suggesting how, despite her insistent defence of Picasso, Dora recognizes that in some ways he did nothing but break her spirit. And Roger Schultz has done an outstanding job with his set and lighting design—this is easily the most ambitious, elaborate set I've ever seen for a Shadow show, and it elegantly conveys the play's subtle shifts between past and present, and fantasy and reality.

I don't think *The Last Train* quite comes together as one cohesive canvas; I think it works better if you approach it instead as a collection of vivid character sketches. And on that level, if you're a theatre fan, it's worth adding to your collection. ●

THE LAST TRAIN

Directed by John Hudson • Written by Beth Graham and Daniela Vaskalic • Starring Coralie Cairns, April Banigan and Maralyn Ryan • Varcona Theatre • To Feb 8 • 434-5564

Life emigrates art

Xin-Yu Zheng's life story is as amazing as the ink paintings in *Art From Life*

By AGNIESZKA MATEJKO

When I first met Xin-Yu Zheng, he did not stand out from the downtown crowd. He looked rather like a poised, successful Western businessman fresh from an important meeting. Only when he spoke did I realize that his connection to Western culture was tenuous at best. (His English, limited to a few words, required the constant help of a translator, Lai Chu Kong.) And only after he began relating the astonishing stories behind *Art From Life*, his exhibition of enormous ink paintings, did I realize how extraordinary his life was.

"I have been an artist for 40 years," Zheng says. "Since I was a little child [in China], I liked to draw." The Chinese authorities recognized his talents very early and selected him to study in a school affiliated with the Academy of Arts. "When they select you, you have no choice," Kong interjects. "You have to be obedient to the country's interest." Upon graduation, Zheng studied

for two years at the Academy, but the Cultural Revolution abruptly interrupted his studies in 1966. "They closed all the universities and students went to the countryside to learn from farmers and factory workers," Zheng says. After lifting few things heavier than a paintbrush for most of his life, Zheng found himself shivering in the northern countryside while doing heavy manual labor. "Most of the farmers were very

PREVIEW VISUAL ARTS

kind to me, because that is their character," Zheng says, explaining that two years of hard labour gave him a life-long gift—"a thick foundation," as he refers to it—that would change his life and art permanently.

As soon as Zheng was released he decided to pursue his new dream of bringing the images of the wild fringes of his vast country to the urban dweller. The government valued his talents as a propaganda artist but also, ironically, supported this vision by paying for his trips. "That's the difference between China and the West," comments Zheng. "In China, a professional artist gets paid for all expenses." With this support, Zheng was free to pursue his quest to paint the camels of the Inner Mongolian desert—hardly a

tourist destination. "If not for the hardship of the countryside I could not survive the north," Zheng says. "I would have waited there to die."

BUT JUST GETTING THERE was an ordeal. First there was a two-day ride on a train, then two days on a bus so packed that he could neither stand nor sit down. "I was like a statue," laughs Zheng, who came off the bus covered with yellow dirt and unable to straighten his legs for hours. Finally two days on horseback took him to his destination; his first step was to find medical help to help heal his bleeding bottom, which was unused to long horse rides. A Mongolian family greeted him with great hospitality. The head of the household offered him an honour reserved for the most revered guests: a yurt in the desert with the host's daughter to attend to his needs. Following local traditions, a glass of water was placed



Xin-Yu Zheng

in the tent and in the morning Zheng was to drink out of it to prove that he did not harm the daughter. (Had he done so, supposedly the water would have caused him great harm.)

Zheng had gone to bed deeply disappointed; the camels he was so intent on painting were nowhere in sight. But as he woke up in the morning, drank out of his glass and opened the tent flaps, the morning light seemed strangely obscured by what appeared to be mountains rising in the desert. In fact, they were

the humps of hundreds of camels. It was this moment that Zheng immortalized in "Humps," a huge painting at the forefront of his exhibition.

"I love nature," Zheng says. "I didn't want to paint small things; I wanted to paint vast, big things. When people see my paintings they can see a limitless landscape. It is for urban people to open their mind." ☐

ART FROM LIFE

By Xin-Yu Zheng • The Works Gallery (Commerce Place) • To Feb 11



theatre notes

By BRENDAN PROCÉ AND PAUL MATWYCHUK

Bigger Than Jesus • Catalyst Theatre • To Feb 1 • preVUE Rick Miller is best known for his international stage hit *MacHomer*, but in his latest production, he's investigating a text that's even more sacred than William Shakespeare—or *The Simpsons*.

"[*Bigger Than Jesus*] explores the Jesus story," Miller says, "but in a very different context from that of the church." The one-man show, which contains 12 characters and plays out in 12 acts (yes, that's right—there is a parallel with Christ's Passion) is, at its heart, the story of a thirtysomething man wrestling with his faith, as well as his feelings about the Roman Catholic dogma he was immersed in during his youth. It's about finding meaning in religion in a post-postmodern context.

"I'm using some of the same words they use in the church," Miller says, "but taking it into the context of the theatre. The idea is to explore and explode the ideas, and find new meaning.... I'm less Catholic now in that I feel less and less connection with the Catholic Church. It doesn't mean I don't have respect for the people who find hope within it, but it's all a part of what I'm trying to understand: why do people need the Church?"

The answer to that question, what with congregations shrinking all over the globe, seems to lie more in the idea of what the Church represents than what the actual act of churchgoing and worship might mean on their own. "I've come to appreciate the search for

the religious experience more than the search for religion," Miller says.

Bigger Than Jesus is billed as a "multimedia performance," but Miller warns audiences not to expect anything excessive. "I really despise using technology gratuitously," he says. Miller relies on an irreverent blend of pop culture and high art for his imagery—everything from the art of Salvador Dalí to a Homer Simpson Pez dispenser to an image of the four evangelists as John, Paul, George and Ringo.

But perhaps most relevant aspect of the show for a contemporary audience is its treatment of the idea of Christ and the ideals that Roman Catholic dogma represent. "The figure of Jesus and the cross have been so abused and confused throughout history," Miller says, "both as weapons and as means to torture. It's pretty easy to trace Christianity throughout the history of war."

A January 17 article on islamonline.net quotes the Pope as saying, "Jews, Christians and Muslims cannot accept that the world be afflicted by hate and that mankind is ravaged by never-ending wars," a hopeful sign that a renewed desire to end religious wars now exists—on the Roman Catholic end, anyway. In an age such as this, Miller's piece may have a more universal appeal, in a world seeking a more universal means of salvation. "I think this piece speaks to people of all denominations," he says. "It's very multicultural." (BP)

The starlost

Last Tuesday, David Hare (the esteemed British playwright best known for such shows as *The Secret Rapture*, *The Blue Room* and *Skylight*) published a brief opinion piece in the *Guardian* in which he railed against that paper's "militantly philistine policy" of including star ratings with their film, music and theatre reviews. "Apart from anything else," Hare wrote, "why does a self-respecting critic agree to a system of grading that renders his or her detailed reaction superfluous?"

'What did the *Guardian* think of it?' 'Oh, they gave it two stars.' Why would any critic let their presumably thoughtful work be so diminished?"

Coincidentally, Hare's piece appeared around the same time that the *Edmonton Journal* dropped the star ratings from their theatre reviews. Liz Nicholls, the *Journal's* theatre critic, was unavailable to comment on the change, but *Journal* culture editor Shawn Ohler filled me in on the details. "Liz and I were just talking," he says, "and I found it incongruous—and had for some time—that we had stars on theatre reviews but not other live performances like music or dance... And you also wonder whether you're being unfair, when you're reviewing community theatre as well as professional theatre—does four stars for Theatre A mean the same thing as four stars for Theatre B?"

Even if the primary motives behind Ohler's decision have more to do with imposing consistency and fairness upon the Culture section than resisting the kind of dumbing-down of cultural commentary that Hare found so offensive (Ohler says movies and CDs will continue to receive star ratings), it's still a positive move that Ohler says has already earned the paper tremendous feedback from the theatre community.

"I think it is the most fantastic thing ever," enthuses Workshop West artistic director Ron Jenkins. "I think it focuses the review on the critic's analysis of the show—what works, what doesn't—as opposed to a blanket star rating that says, 'Oh, you don't want to see this.' 'Why don't I want to see this?' 'Because it's two stars.' I also think it takes the pressure off the reviewer and allows them to have an expansive opinion without them feeling that they're being cornered into giving a show a bunch of stars like a menu."

I couldn't agree more. God knows I slam the *Journal* a lot, but Ohler and Nicholls deserve nothing but praise for this new, against-the-grain policy. Give it five stars! (PM)

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DANCE

AMELIA Jubilee Auditorium, 11455-87 Ave (427-2760/451-8000) • La La La Human Steps, presented by the Brian Webb Dance Company, performed by eight dancers, choreographed by Édouard Lacroix • Jan 29 (8pm) • \$25-\$50 • Tickets available at TicketMaster

ETUDE #1/CHORALE Arden Theatre, St. Albert (459-1542) • Presented and choreography by Compagnie Marie Chouhndar • Tue, Feb. 3 (8pm) • \$22.50 (adult)/\$18.50 (student/senior) • Tickets available at Arden box office

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ALBERTA CRAFT COUNCIL GALLERY 10186-106 St (488-6611/4808-5900) • Open Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm • 10am-6pm (closed all hols) • **WIND CHILL 40 C OR WINTER WONDERLAND** Members mixed media artwork; until Mar. 27 • **DISCOVERY GALLERY: DIVERSITY** Metal artworks by Rosemarie Janzen and glass artworks by Fern Jordan; until Feb. 21

ALL SAINTS' ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL 10035-103 St (477-0001/428-6323) • Open: Mon, Wed, Fri 10am-2pm, Thu-Fri 5pm-8pm, Sat noon-4pm, Sun 9:30am-2:30pm • **ANGLICANISM AND THE WESTERN CHRISTIAN TRADITION: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE** Textile panels in the Cathedral Hall track the history of the Christian Church in Britain since the time of the Romans • Until Feb. 12

ARTS+32 STUDIO GALLERY 3rd Floor, Knol Building, 10217-106 St (423-2966) • Open Thu 5-8pm or by appointment • Artworks by Brian Brown, Jeff Collins, Aaron Pederson, Tim Rechner, Paul Roberts, Gabriella Rosende, Greg Swain, Anna Szul, Eugene Uhuad and guests

CENTRE D'ARTS VISUELS DE L'ALBERTA 9103-95 Ave (461-3422) • Group show featuring artworks by members of the Centre; until Feb. 4 • **ARTISTIC EXPRESSION**: Paintings by Geo Parg, Lise Thorne; watercolours and photos by Isabelle Fréchette; retrospective of artworks by Lee Bale • Feb. 6-18

CHRISTL BERGSTROM'S RED GALLERY 9621-82 Ave (439-8210) • Open Mon-Fri 11am-5pm • **A VIEW TO UNDERSTANDING**: Portraits by Christl Bergstrom; until March • **THE DEAD DOG DOGMA SERIES**: Paintings by Christl Bergstrom; through January • Open reception: Sat, Jan. 31 (7-7pm)

EDMONTON ART GALLERY 2 Sir Winston Churchill Sq (422-6223) • Open Tue-Wed and Fri 10:30am-5pm; Thu 10:30am-8pm; Sat, Sun 11am-5pm. Closed Mon • **STORYBOARD**: until Feb. 5 • **THE OTHER LANDSCAPE**: until Feb. 15 • **GOZULIA VS. SKATEBOARDERS**: until Feb. 22 • **KIM AND ALAN: DAVID HOFORS**: until Feb. 22 • **CRAIG LEBLANC WORK FROM THE SOPHOMORE JUNK**: until Feb. 22 • **CHILDREN'S GALLERY: SPELLBOUND**: until Jan. 2005 • **TALKING TO TREES: A PORTRAIT OF EMILY CARR**: Play by Elizabeth Bowring, presented by the Alberta Society of Artists; Jan. 29-31 (7:30pm); Sun, Feb. 1 (2pm) • **ART FOR LUNCH**: EAG Theatre; Thu, Jan. 29 • **ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN FILM SERIES**: Tue, Feb. 3, 10, 17, 24 (7pm) • \$15 • \$12/\$10 (student/senior), \$5 (children 6-12)/free (member/children 5 and under)

ELECTRUM DESIGN STUDIO 12419 Stony Plain Rd (482-1402) • Open Tue-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat 10am-4pm • **2003 RETROSPECTIVE SHOW**: until Jan. 31 • **TURNING A NEW PAGE**: Artworks by Mason Ebyen • Feb. 3-28 • Opening reception: Sat, Feb. 7 (1-4pm)

EXTENSION CENTRE GALLERY 2nd Fl University Extension Centre, 8303-112 St (492-3034) • Open Mon-Thu 8:30am-8pm; Fri 9:30am-4:30pm; Sat 9am-noon • Lorna Kemp, graduating student exhibition; until Feb. 4 • **FOOD FOR THE SOUL**: Paintings by Rose Lisenburger, graduating student exhibition; Feb. 9-18; opening reception: Fri, Feb. 13 (6-9pm)

FORT DOOR 10308-87 Ave (432-7533) • Open Mon-Wed 10am-6pm; Thu-Fri 10am-9pm; Sat 10am-6pm; Sun 12-5pm • Eskimo soapstone carvings kayak by Charlie Ogyuk, West Coast Indian and Eskimo silver and gold jewellery by L. Wadhams • Until Feb. 29

FRINGE GALLERY Bsm 10516 Whyte Ave (432-0240) • Open Mon-Sat 9:30am-6pm • **UNFINISHED VERSE**: Paintings and drawings by Paddy Lamb • Until Jan. 30 • Staff show; through February

GALLERY DE JONGE 27022A Hwy 16A, Spruce Grove (962-9505) • Open Tue-Sun 11-5pm, anytime by appointment • Work by local artists Beth Coulas, Earl Cummins, Henry de Jager and Mary Matthews

HARCOURT HOUSE 10215-112 St (426-4180) • Open Mon-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat 12-4pm • **ANY PRECIOUS GIRL** A retrospective of Violet Owen's artworks • Until Feb. 7

JEFF ALLEN GALLERY Strathcona Place, 10831 University Ave (433-5807) • Open: Mon-Fri 9am-4pm • **CHRISTMAS SHOW AND SALE**: Group show • Until Jan. 29

JOHNSON GALLERY 7711-85 St (465-6171) • Open Mon-Fri 9am-5:30pm; Sat 9am-5pm • Artworks by Val Dunn, Wendy Risdale, Jack Ellis, Joe Allen, Meta Ranger, Elizabeth Hibbs, David Nash, Jim Vest, Myrna Kubo and Audrey Plannmuller. Pottery by Noboru Kubo and Helena Ball. Paintings on agate by Joyce Boyer • Until Jan. 30

JOHNSON GALLERY 11817-80 St (479-8424) • Open Mon-Fri 9:30am-5:30pm; Sat 9:30am-4pm • Artworks by George Weber, Loren Chabot, Prints by Myles MacDonald and Toti • Until Jan. 30

LAITUDE 53 10248-106 St (423-5353) • MAIN SPACE: **SPECTRONIC ESPERANTO**: Paintings by Loren Spector; until Feb. 7 • **PROJEKT ROOM: EXUBERANT NOTIONS**: Fibre-based 3D drawings by Richard Boulet • **UNWITTED GUESTS**: Montreal performance artists Jean François Prost and Marie Suzanne Deslites; until Feb. 7

MC MULLEN GALLERY of A Hospital, East Entrance, 8440-112 St (407-7152) • Open Mon-Fri 10am-8pm, Sat-Sun 1-8pm • **MULTIPLES**: Multiple mediums, multiple dimensions, multiple artists; artworks by eight local artists; until Apr. 4; opening reception: Thu, Jan. 29 (7-9pm, tentative)

MC PARG MULTICULTURAL PUBLIC ART GALLERY 5411-51 St, Stony Plain (963-2777) • Open 10am-6pm • **OFFERINGS**: Artworks by Fiona Connell; until Feb. 2 • **First Parkland Potters' Guild** biennial show; Feb. 6-Mar. 8

MUSÉE HÉRITAGE MUSEUM 5 St. Anne St. St. Albert (459-1528) • **SITTING PRETTY-LA RÊTE DES TOI-LETTES**: until Feb. 2 • **I THINK I CAN**: How to redo the loo; Jan. 31, 1-3pm; pre-register

NINA HAGGERTY CENTRE FOR THE ARTS 9702-111 Ave (474-7611) • Open Mon-Thu 10am-2pm • **STOLLERY GALLERY: THREE WOMEN ARTISTS**: until Feb. 5

PITS GALLERY Revillon Building, 10320-102 Ave • Open: Thu-Sat 10am-5pm • **LAB 135: ADVENTURES IN ABSTRACT**: Abstract photography by Jessica Martens and Amy Von Stackelberg; until Jan. 31

PROVINCIAL MUSEUM OF ALBERTA 12845-102 Ave (453-9100) • Open: Sat, Thu 9am-5pm, Fri 9am-9pm • **TEDDY BEARS ARE BACK**: Until Feb. 16 • **8IG THINGS 2**: Featuring large-scale sculptures by the artists of the North Edmonton Sculpture Workshop, until Apr. 30 • **SYNCRUDE CANADA ABORIGINAL PEOPLE'S GALLERY**: Spans 11,000 years and 500 generations, people of the past and present, recordings, film, lights, artifacts and more. Permanent exhibit • **THE NATURAL HISTORY GALLERY**: • **BUG ROOM**: Live invertebrate display. Permanent exhibit • **THE BIRD GALLERY**: Mounted birds. Permanent exhibit • **TREASURES OF THE EARTH**: Geology collection. Permanent exhibit • **WILD ALBERTA GALLERY**: Permanent exhibit • **A TO Z AT THE MUSEUM**: Every Sat (9am-11am): family-fun drop-in program

PROFILES PUBLIC ART GALLERY 19 Perron Street, St. Albert (460-4310) • Open Tue-Sat 10-5pm • **THU 10am-8pm** • **CAPTIVATING COMMODORE**: Three lavatories created by Gempert, Nicole Gallelli, Paul Freeman; until Mar. 5 • **SYSTÈME**: Artworks by Nicole Gallelli, Daryl Rydman, Margaret Witsch; until Mar.

ROWLES AND COMPANY 10130-103 St (426-4035) • Open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm; Sat Noon-5pm • Blown glass sculptures by BC and Alberta artists including Mark Gibeau, Arte Vargas, Susan Cottisell and Marcia de Vique • Until January • **ALTERNATIVE EXHIBITION SPACES**: **HOTEL MACDONALD**: Acrylic paintings by Steve Mills • **OXFORD TOWER LOBBY**: Oil paintings by Audrey Plannmuller • **THE BELL TOWER**: Acrylic paintings by Sheila Luk; watercolours by Glenda Beaver; blown glass by Arte Vargas, Mark Gibeau and Marcia de Vique • **WESTIN HOTEL LOBBY**: Oil paintings by Audrey Plannmuller • Until Jan. 29

SCOTT GALLERY 10411-124 St (488-3619) • Open Tue-Sat 10am-5pm • Rotating show featuring artworks by Doris McCarthy, Barbara Atkins, Tom Wilcock, Marianne Watchel and gallery artists • Through January

SEGHERS STUDIO GALLERY 6th Fl, North Tower, 10030-107 St, Seventh Street Plaza (425-6885) • Open Tue-Thu 5:30-9pm or by appointment • Artworks by David Seiders, Robert Eschen, Eric Butcherworth, Bianca Khan, Linda Malmes, Neil McClelland, Jacquelyn Mulyk, Kevin Beck • Through February

SNAP GALLERY 10137-104 St (423-1492) • Open Tue-Sat (12-5pm) • **BETWEEN SPACES**: Printmaking art works by Mark Bovey • Until Feb. 7 • **SNAPPY SAT URBAN**: Terrific Transfers: For children 4-12yrs; Sat, Jan. 31; \$55 (child)/free (accompanying adults)

SNOWBIRD GALLERY WEM, 8882-170 St (444-1024) • Work by J. Yardley-Jones and Gregg Johnson, acrylics by Jim Vest, pottery by Noboru Kubo and Jacqueline Stenberg

SPECTRUM ART GALLERY AND STUDIO 11745 Jasper Ave (482-6677) • Open daily 10am-6pm • Paintings by Christopher Lucas, Patricia Young, Bridget Turner, Deanna Larson and David Phillips

STANLEY A. MILLNER LIBRARY Main Floor, 7 Sir Winston Churchill Square • **INSPIRATION FROM THE ROCKIES**: Artworks by Monika Dery • Until Jan. 29 • Gala closing: Thu, Jan. 29 (6-30pm-8:30pm)

VAAA GALLERY 3rd Fl, Harcourt House, 10215-112 St (421-1371) • **GAIA: HER FORM**: Photography, sculpture and paintings of the female form by Robert Todrick, Alan Henderson, and Sharon Moore-Foster • Until Feb. 7

LITERARY

CALABASH CAFE 10630-124 St (414-6625) • Every Wed (7-30pm): **The Poet's Desire** readings by local authors

GREENWOODS BOOKSHOPPE 7925-104 St (439-2005) • Authors Don McTavish, Monica Wilson and Rick Ranson, an evening of yarn-spinning and laughter • Thu, Feb. 5 (7:30pm) • Phone 432-9427 for info

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA Education South Building, U of A Campus, 463-3679 • Sharon Butale presented by the Canadian Authors Association • Fri, Jan. 30 (8pm)

LIVE COMEDY

BLIND PIG PUB AND GRILL 32 St. Anne St. St. Albert • Every Sun (8pm): Sunday Night Funnies with spiritual detective, Barbara May and guest

THE COMEDY FACTORY 3414 Gateway Boulevard (469-4999) • Jason Blanchard; Jan. 30-31 • Carter Hertie; Feb. 5-7

FARGO'S 10307-82 Ave (433-4526) • Fargo's Laugh-a-Lot Comedy • Every Sun

RED'S WEM (481-6420) • Hypno Sundays: With hypnotist Saleeh • 9:30pm • Free

THEATRE

BIGGER THAN JESUS Catalyst Theatre, 8529 Gateway Boulevard (431-1750) • Part of Catalyst Theatre's Blind Dates With Theatre • Rick Miller and Daniel Brook's ambitious performance piece uses 12 interlocking character portraits to examine the story of Jesus Christ, the question of his divinity and his impact not just upon world religion in general but, in particular, upon a 33-year-old man coming to grips with his Catholic upbringing • Until Feb. 1 • \$21 (adult)/\$16 (student/senior); Sun, Feb. 1 (8pm) Pay-What-You-Can • Tickets available at Catalyst Theatre

BLUE/ORANGE The Citadel, Rice Theatre, 9828-101A Ave (425-1820) • David Storch directs British playwright Joe Penhall's issue-driven drama about a young psychiatrist battling his money-conscious supervisor over the fate of one of his patients, a black man whose schizophrenia makes him a dangerous candidate for release • Until Feb. 15 • Tickets available at Citadel Theatre box office

THE BOYS FROM SYRACUSE John L. Haar Theatre, MacEwan Centre for the Arts, 10045-156 St (497-4408) • Presented by Grant MacEwan College (497-4408) • Rodgers and Hart's classic 1938 musical farce, based on William Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors*, about the complications that ensue when two pairs of identical twins—two identical masters and two identical slaves, none of whom knows of the others' existence—arrive at the same time in the city of Ephesus • Feb. 6-14

CHIMPPOV The New Varcona Theatre, 10329-83 Ave (448-0695) • Long-form improvisational sketches performed by Rapid Fire Theatre's top improvisers • Every Wed (11pm) except last Sat of each month

DIE-NASTY Varcona Theatre, 10329-83 Ave (448-0695) • Jeff Haslam, Stephanie Wolfe, Mark Meer, Josh Dean, Joshua Stewart and Leona Brausen celebrate the 13th season of Edmonton's legendary live improvised soap opera by spoofing the '50s melodramas of Douglas Sirk and Grace Metalious • Every Monday (8pm)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, WANDA June Walderale Playhouse, 10322-83 Ave (439-2845/420-1757) • Sam Vartanek directs Kurt Vonnegut's only full-length play, a romantic satire about a young widow whose

plans to remarry are upset by the unexpected reappearance of her husband, an overbearing male chauvinist who she believed had died eight years ago during an African safari • Jan. 29-31, Feb. 3-7 (8pm); Sun, Feb. 1 (2pm) • \$12-14 (adult)/\$10-12 (student/senior) • Tickets available at TIX on the Square, door

HARRY AND SALLY'S WEDDING Kibulations Dinner Theatre, WEM, 882-170 St (484-2424) • Jan. 30-Apr. 4 • Wed, Thu, Sun: \$46.95 Fri-Sat \$56.95 child (12 and under) \$20.05, senior (Wed only) \$31.05

INDIANA BONES AND THE RETURN OF HELMUT SCHMELMUT Celebrations Dinner Theatre, Oakl Entertainment Hotel, 13103 Fort Rd (448-9339) • Daredevil archaeologist Indiana Bones must save the day yet again when his archival Helmut Schmelmuts reappears on the scene, once again bent on world destruction in his musical spoof of the *Raiders of the Lost Ark* series of adventure films • Until Jan. 31 (Sat 6:15pm, Sun 5:15pm) • \$43.95 (Wed, Thu, Sun)/\$49.95 (Fri, Sat)/\$20 (child 12 and under)/free (child under 2)

KABOOM! FESTIVAL La Cité Francophone, 8627 Rue Marie-Anne Gaboury (477-5955/420-1750) • Presented by Workshop West Theatre • Feb. 5-21 • Workshop West's annual festival of new Canadian plays. Featuring: *Cal-de-Sac*, an eerie new play by Daniel MacIvor and Daniel Brooks, the creators of *House and Monster* (February 5-15), an evening with Daniel MacIvor and Sherrie Johnson, the artistic director and producer of Toronto's acclaimed da kamera theatre troupe (Feb. 9); *Playthings Garage Readings* two evenings of staged readings of short plays by this year's graduates of Workshop West's training program for emerging playwrights (Feb. 17-18); and *Springboards*, staged readings of hot new Canadian plays currently in development (Feb. 19-21) • Tickets available at TIX on the Square

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Blind Dates With Theatre

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JANUARY 29-FEBRUARY 4, 2004

THE LAST TRAIN Varcona Theatre, 10329-83 Ave (420-1757/434-5564) • Presented by Shadow Theatre • John Hudson directs Carole Cairns, Celina Stachow and Marilyn Ryan in The Drowning Girls playwrights Beth Graham and Daniela Vaskalick's offbeat drama about five women—the subjects of paintings by Picasso, Modigliani, Toulouse-Lautrec, Van Gogh and Degas—who converse about life, love and death as they travel in a soiled German railway car from Paris to Switzerland in the closing months of World War II • Until Feb. 8 • Wed, Thu 8pm, Sun 2pm; \$15 (adult)/\$12 (student/senior); Fri, Sat 8pm: \$20 (adult)/\$16 (student/senior); Tue: \$10; Sat matinees Pay-What-You-Can • Tickets are available at TIX on the Square

THE MAINTENANCE MAN Jekyll and Hyde Pub, 10610-100 Ave (420-1757) • Presented by Image Theatre • Richard Harris's comedy about a philanthropic husband bouncing feverishly between his wife, his mistress and the unseen presence of his overbearing mother • Until Jan. 31 (8pm, 6pm door/dinner), Tue-Sat • \$13 (Tue-Thu), \$16 (Fri-Sat) • Tickets available at the door, TIX on the Square

THE MILL ON THE FLOES Timms Centre for the Arts, U of A Campus, 87 Ave, 112 St (492-2495) •

Presented by Studio Theatre • Jan Selman directs Helen Edmundson's stage adaptation of George Eliot's 1860 novel about a woman whose romantic life faces tremendous opposition due to the constraints of Victorian society, circumstance and her loving but temperamentally opposed brother • Feb. 5-14 (8pm); pre-view, Wed, Feb. 4 (8pm); Matinee: Thu, Feb. 12 (12:30pm); no show Sunday • \$8-\$20 • Tickets available at Timms Centre box office

STAGE STRUCK! Waterlode Playhouse, 10322-83 Ave (434-6559) • Presented by Alberta Drama Festival Association • John Hudson adjudicates plays from Alberta Theatre, the Bedlam Theatre Company, Manual Transmission Theatre and others in the 2004 edition of the Edmonton Region One-Act Play Festival • Feb. 7-8 (7pm) • \$27 (adult)/\$5 (student/senior)

OH SUSANNA! The Varcona Theatre, 10329-83 Ave, 10610-100 Ave (420-1757) • Presented by Image Theatre's live Euro-style variety show, featuring games, numbers and celebrity interviews, all presided over by international glamour-guy Susanna Patchouli and her co-host, Eros, God of Love • Sat, Jan. 31 (11pm)

PACAMEMBO Arts Bams, 10330-84 Ave (448-9000) • Presented by Fringe Theatre For Young People • The English-language premiere of Alphonse playwright Wajdi Mouawad's whimsical and funny children's play about a young girl who is left in the temporary care of her aged grandmother Marie-Marie, and who travels to a wonderful and mysterious alternate universe when Marie-

Marine passes away • Jan. 30-Feb. 6; Jan. 30-Feb. 6, Feb. 7 (2pm); Jan. 31, Feb. 7 (11am and 2pm); Feb. 1, Feb. 8 (2pm) • Tickets available by phone at 448-9000

THE PIRATE GHOST OF CAPTAIN SMUG Celebrations Dinner Theatre, Oasis Entertainment Hotel, 13103 Fort Rd (448-9339) • The crew of the pirate ship Scoury sets sail in search of buried treasure in this swashbuckling adventure, packed with music, swordfights and mermaids • Feb. 6-May 1

PROPHETESS Jekyll and Hyde Pub and Restaurant, 10610-100 Ave (427-1757) • Presented by Sound and Fury Theatre • Scott Sharplin directs Vanessa Sabourin in this unusual theatrical presentation, adapted by Sharplin from four of Shakespeare's history plays, which tells the epic story of Margaret, who evens from a timid virgin into "Shakespeare's greatest villainess" • Feb. 5-15; Tue-Sat (8pm) • Pay-What-You-Can Sundays (8pm) • Wed, Feb. 11; talk back session • \$14 (adult)/\$12 (student/senior) • Tickets available at TIX on the Square

PUPPETRY OF THE PENIS Winspear Centre, 4 Sir Winston Churchill Sq (428-1108) • The international theatrical sensation, in which two naked performers demonstrate "the ancient Australian art of genital orgasm" • Mon, Feb. 9 (7pm) • \$41.50 • Tickets at the Winspear Centre box office

ROCKIN' VEGAS Mayfield Dinner Theatre, Mayfield Dinner Theatre, Mayfield Inn, 16615-109 Ave (483-

4551) • A high-energy musical week celebrating the music of Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, Liberace, Neil Diamond, Wayne Newton and other performers associated with Las Vegas • Until Feb. 22 • Tickets available at Mayfield Dinner Theatre box office • New Year's Eve: \$135 (includes dinner and show)

STONES IN HIS POCKETS The Citadel, Shorcor Theatre, 9828-101A Ave (425-1820) • James MacDonald directs John Ulfyatt and John Kirkpatrick in Marie Jones's inventive, award-winning comedy about a pair of Irishmen who receive a brutal lesson in the futility of the movie industry when they land jobs as extras in a Hollywood mega-production that has chosen their sleepy, picturesque village as its principal location • Until Feb. 15 • Tickets available at Citadel Theatre box office

SURVIVAL: THE IMPROVISATION GAME The Third Space, 11516-103 St (424-6304) • Live, competitive improvisational comedy with "an element of danger" • Jan. 30, Feb. 6, 7, 21 • \$5 • Tickets available at the door

TALKING TO TREES: A PORTRAIT OF EMILY CARR Edmonton Art Gallery Theatre, 2 Sir Winston Churchill Sq (422-6232/420-1757) • Alison Wells stars in this special limited-run revival of Elizabeth Bowring's Fringe play about the life and times of the iconoclastic Canadian painter and writer Emily Carr • Jan. 29-31 (7:30pm); Sun, Feb. 1 (2pm) • \$15 (adult)/\$12 (student/senior)/\$12 (Sun Matinee, everyone) • Tickets available at TIX on the Square

Kushok Dhamchoe of Namgyal Monastery in India • Every Tues (7:00pm); beginners • Every Wed (7:00pm) and Sun (11am-1pm): advanced

UNESCO CULTURE OF PEACE INITIATIVE Boyle McCauley Health Unit, 10625-96 St (473-4868) • Education committee meeting, Alan Blanes (facilitator) • Thu, Jan. 29 (6:00pm)

UPWARD BOUND TOASTMASTERS Baker Centre, 101 St, 10025-106 St (477-2613) • Public speaking, open house • Wed, Feb. 11 (6:00pm)

QUEER LISTINGS

AXIOS (454-8449) • A support group, local chapter of the International Association of Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Rite Catholic Gay and Lesbian Christians

BOOTS AND SANDALS 10242-106 St (423-5014) • Lamentation committee meeting, Alan Blanes (facilitator) • Members only

BUDNY'S NITE CLUB 11725-8 Jasper Ave (488-6636) • Open 9-3 • Dancing, strip contests, go-go boys • Every Mon: Free pool • DJs Arrow-Chance, Jeffy Pop, Code Red • No membership needed

DIGNITY EDMONTON (482-6845) Support community for lesbian/gay Catholics and friends

DOWN UNDER 12224 Jasper Ave (482-7960) •

THEATRESPORTS Varscona Theatre, 10329-83 Ave (448-0695) • Presented by Rapid Fire Theatre • Teams of improvisers create sketches on the spot based on audience suggestions, and have the results evaluated by a team of hilarious judges • Every Fri (11pm) • Tickets available at phone

THIS IS OUR YOUTH Apmath Theatre, 11315-106 Ave (454-0583/420-1757) • Presented by All Your Television Theatre • Kevin Sudley directs Chris Bullock, Nathan Cuckow and Shannon Larson in Kenneth Lonergan's comedy/drama, set in 1982, about three teenage refugees from New York's Upper West Side struggling to face up to their impending adulthood while dealing drugs and looking for quick cash over the course of an eventful couple of days away from their parents • Feb. 5-21, Tue-Sat 8pm, Sun 2pm • Two for one-Tuesdays: Feb. 10, 17; Pay-What-You-Can: Matinees: Feb. 7, 14, 21 • \$16 (adult)/\$12 (student/senior)/\$20 (open on night gala)/\$12 (pre-view) • Tickets available at TIX on the Square, door

VINCENT IN BRUXTON The Roxy, 10708-124 St (4-2440) • Presented by Theatre North • Jim Delaney directs Martin Happer and Sandra Nicholls in Young Vincent van Gogh, who discovers his own passion as an artistic genius while living as a lodger at a dreary British boarding house run by a depressed, middle-aged landlady • Feb. 3-22 • Tickets available at Roxy Theatre box office

STEAMBAT

EDMONTON RAINBOW BUSINESS ASSOCIATION (422-6207) • An organization for gay men and lesbians in business and their non-gay friends to share business knowledge, learn, make friends and network in a positive, proud space where being yourself is the norm

GAY MEN'S OUTREACH CREW (GMO) 45, 99106 St (488-0564) • Peer education initiative for gay men that works toward preventing the spread of HIV by improving self-esteem

HIV NETWORK OF EDMONTON SOCIETY 105, 10550-102 St (488-3742) • Programs and support services for people affected and infected by HIV/AIDS • related illnesses, counselling, referrals, support group, harm reduction, education, advocacy and public awareness campaigns

ICARE 202A, 10242-105 St (448-1768) • www.icare.alberta.org • The Interfaith Centre for AIDS/HIV Resources and Education (formerly Interfaith Association on AIDS) provides spiritual support and connections for those affected by HIV/AIDS

ILLUSIONS SOCIAL CLUB GLCC, Suite 45, 9912, 106 St • Meetings every second Thursday each month

INSIDE/OUT U of A Campus • Monthly meetings for

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EVENTS WEEKLY

Fax your free listings to 426-2889 or e-mail them to listings@vuw.ca. Deadline is Friday at 3pm

CLUBS/LECTURES

BEYOND MIND SCIENCE INTO MYSTICISM The Unchurch Life Enrichment Centre, 4936-87 St (462-4491) • Every Sun (11am): Presented by Jacyn Darby

BUDDHIST MEDITATION Garmea United Place, 11148-85 Ave (412-1006) www.meditationalberta.org • Every Thu (7:00pm): Meditation group

CLIMATE CHANGE: ADAPTATION, IMPACTS AND VULNERABILITIES 2022 Dentistry Pharmacy Building, U of A Campus (492-5825) • Polar Bears, Seals, and Climate in Hudson Bay and the High Arctic presented by Dr. Ian Stirling (Canadian Wildlife Services); Jan. 29 (4:00pm) • Dr. John Edwards presents Environmental Change in the Canadian Arctic Archipelago; Feb. 5 • Free

DOING IT IN THE DARK HCL-2, U of A Campus • Conversations About Film, film studies seminar #3 pre-

sented by Jerry White and Heather Zwicker • Thu, Feb. 5 (3:00pm)

E.C.A.W.A.R. (EDMONTON COALITION AGAINST WAR AND RACISM) Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (978-2713) • Special general meeting • Sun, Feb. 8 (7:00pm) www.wage-peace.com

JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY Stanley A. Milner Library, Edmonton Room (434-1550) • Jane Austen's Biographers, Different Perspectives • Sat, Jan. 31 (2:40pm) • Free

LANGUAGE AND POWER alnabulshabab.ca, www.arts.ualberta.ca/~agaa/fruchl.html • **Humanities Lecture Theatre 1-1**, U of A Campus; presented by Dr. Edwards; Thu, Feb. 5 (7:30pm) • **Tory Bids**, 14-28, U of A Campus; student symposium Politics of Language, Ethnicity, and the Nation presented by Dr. Edwards; Fri, Feb. 6 (1-2:30pm) • **Atheabasca Hall**, Heritage Lounge, The Ecology of Language: Critical Remarks presented by Dr. Edwards; Fri, Feb. 6 (4:30pm)

THE MYTHS AND SCIENCE OF KEEPING DOLPHINS IN CAPTIVITY Stanley A. Milner Library, 7 Sir

words, define the nature of the alchemical magic you are here on Earth to carry out.

GEMINI

In his masterpiece, *The Divine Comedy*, Gemini poet Dante Alighieri described Hell as having nine levels, each deeper in the earth and filled with more terrible sinners than the one above it. Condemned to the eighth level, along with liars, pimps, hypocrites and frauds, were astrologers. Yet in another book, *The Convivio*, Dante expressed a reverence for astrology, calling it the highest and most noble of all the sciences. Was he confused? No. He believed that though astrology is a high and noble science, some of its practitioners abuse it so dreadfully they give it a bad name. Can you do what Dante did, Gemini? Can you comfortably hold big paradoxes? I hope so. Wherever you seem to see nonsensical incongruities this week, you will need to penetrate deeper and understand better.

CANCER

One of the things I like best about the Dalai Lama (our fellow Crab) is his practical approach to spirituality. An interviewer once urged him to discourse on how to cultivate loving kindness. His Holiness said something like, "That may be too much to ask. How about if we just work on getting the 'kindness' part right?" I bring this up, Cancerian, because the astrological omens suggest that there's nothing more important for you in the coming week than to be charitable and helpful. It doesn't matter whether or not you feel charitable and helpful; be that way anyway.

LEO

In Norway, women comprise 40 per cent of

the government, and state-owned businesses are required to have at least 40 per cent of their board seats filled by women. Private companies will have to meet this standard by 2005. In contrast, 14 per cent of the Canadian government is female, while Canadian women hold 13 per cent of their country's corporate board seats. If you're thinking what I am, the government and corporations of Canada need a makeover. I nominate your tribe to lead the charge in the coming months. The astrological omens suggest that whatever gender you are, you Leos will have an enhanced ability to promote females and feminine values in any sphere where you have influence. Start immediately, and be ingeniously relentless.

VIRGO

Jack Nicklaus had more major tournament wins than any other golfer in history. Skill and practice were at the heart of his athletic prowess, but on at least one occasion he tapped into a more mysterious source of power. In 1973, he got into an uncharacteristic slump that had him stumped. Then one night he had a dream in which he experimented with a new grip on his clubs. When he tried the golf course the next morning, he won the dream's suggestion. It worked; his funk ended. I hope you'll draw inspiration from Nicklaus's example, Virgo. If you start drawing a blank in your area of expertise, be willing to call on help you'd normally never seek—maybe even the woo-woo kind.

LIBRA

I invoke Kwan Yin, Chinese goddess of compassion, and ask her to receive the cry of your heart. I pray to Agni, Hindu god of fire, that he might arouse and feed your most catalytic creativity. I summon Bast, Egyptian goddess of play, to show you how to deepen your commitment to

life by having more fun. Finally, I offer a bribe to Lilith, Pagan trickster goddess, in the hope that she will steal one of your inhibitions and reveal to you the location of an erogenous zone you've neglected.

SCORPIO

Astrologer Steven Forrest says that you Scorpios are experts at picking the locks to your unconscious minds. Many of the other signs prefer to keep their hidden depths off-limits, but you are inexhaustible explorers, always burrowing down further into the Scary Unknown to discover more clues to the Great Mystery. Libras may specialize in fostering beauty and harmony and Cancers are masters of nurturing, but your sign is adept at busting taboos and undoing repression. I hope you're ready to live up to your reputation, because the coming weeks will be prime time for your signature brand of soul retrieval.

SAGITTARIUS

The way politicians create legislation is akin to how the meat industry makes sausage. The average person might like or benefit from the result, but she'd really prefer not to see how it's done or what goes into it. Though you may not be a sausage-maker or politician, Sagittarius, I foresee a similar kind of process occupying your attention in the coming week. Your challenge will be to patch together a workable, maybe even attractive outcome by taking care of all the messy details with discreet integrity.

CAPRICORN

It's prime time for you to steal good ideas from creative innovators and use them to enhance your life. You're in an astrological

phase when imitation of the right influences—bright and beautiful and benevolent influences—can lead to rapid progress (Please don't imitate mediocre, mean-spirited behaviour, though). Copy the styles of fashion adepts, Capricorn. Borrow the successful methods that your competitors and cohorts have employed at their jobs. Read stories about people who are skilled at the art of living and adopt their strategies as your own. You should always give credit to your sources, of course. The point is not to pretend you're the most original thinker in the history of the world, but to make your self happier and freer.

AQUARIUS

In the last 50 years, America's Great Plains area has lost a third of its population, due largely to the disappearance of family farms. People are moving out in droves. Ghost towns are proliferating. From one perspective, that's sad, but from another, it's cause for celebration: the wilderness is returning in some places, and vast herds of buffalo once again roam the land. Is there any chance you'd consider initiating a comparable transformation in your inner realms during the coming weeks, Aquarius? Personally, I'd like to see some of your over-civilized parts revert to the natural state. According to my reading of the astrological omens, the cosmos agrees with me.

PISCES

The task you'll be faced with this week reminds me of what Australian TV personality Steve Irwin did a few weeks ago. No, you won't have to literally stand next to a 13-foot crocodile and feed it a hunk of meat while cradling a baby in your other arm. But you may very well have to be fierce and tender at the same time, or wild and protective, or daring and loving. ☺



free
will
astrology

By ROB BREZSNY

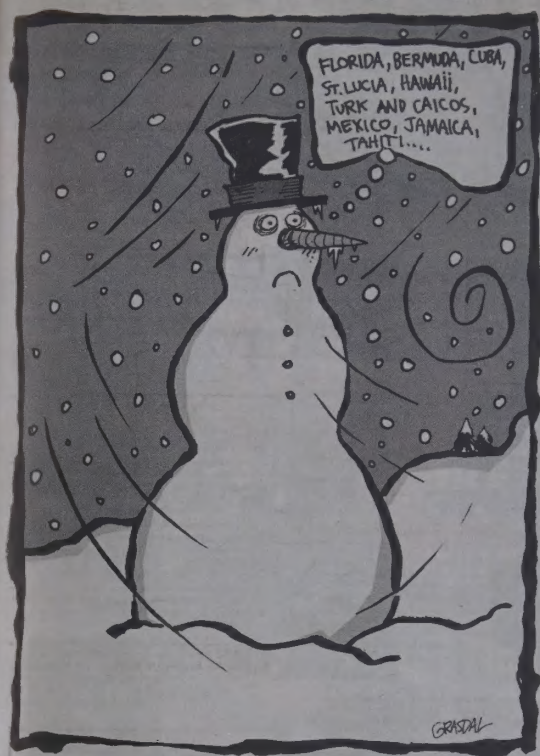
ARIES

I suggest you deal creatively with budding tension between you and your allies. Maybe you could convince them to get down on the floor with you and tussle like puppies. Or how about organizing a game of paintball? Gather together in someone's backyard and throw rocks at dishes, bottles and old TVs. Sneak a boombox into an abandoned building and have a guerrilla dance party. Or stage a lying contest in which everyone vies to tell the most outrageous whoppers. Any one of these strategies will go far towards ensuring the success of joint ventures in the coming weeks.

TAURUS

"Mathematician Paul Erdos used to describe himself as a 'machine for turning coffee into theorems,'" writes philosopher Helena Cronin at www.edge.org. "In much the same way, genes are machines for turning oxygen, water, light, zinc, calcium and iron into bears, beetles, bacteria or bluebells." According to my reading of the astrological omens, Taurus, it's a perfect time to apply this way of thinking to yourself. By the end of this week, see if you can fill in the blanks in the following sentence: "I am a machine for turning _____ into _____." In other

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